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THE POET IN CRISIS:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF THE BOUFFON IN BAUDELAIRE'S WORKS

by

Ⓒ Judith Spencer

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
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DEPARTMENT OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE POET IN CRISIS: AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF THE BOUFFON IN BAUDELAIRE'S WORKS submitted by Judith Spencer in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date 28 · NOV. 78 ·

This thesis is dedicated to my
family, and to my extended family.

ABSTRACT

The following study of the bouffon in Baudelaire's works is conceived of as a socio-literary essay. A brief introduction sketches the social and literary background of the clown in the nineteenth century. The opening chapter outlines the funambulesque social position of the Romantic artist, his contradictory situation as a bourgeois monad aspiring to aristocratic status, his ideological isolation in a sea of rising mercantilism, as he effects a perilous equilibrium between the external exigencies of his empirical self and the internal exigencies of his creative being. The second chapter outlines the lucid and ludic nature of the creative consciousness of the sublime artist-jongleur: the omnipotence of the artist's hyperbolic ego culminates, however, in the derisive denunciation of the imposture of art, as the artist unmasks the artist unmasking the imitative and artificial character of literary creation in his parody of the facticity and fabrication of all art. A third chapter develops the central theme of the second in terms of its implications for the poetic experience and the poet's status in society: the poet-pariah is the buffoon, eternally at the mercy of his aesthetic pretensions as well as his social milieu. The dissertation culminates in an exploration of the "histrionics" of aesthetic creation. Just as the artist is the literary histrio, so is man, in the final analysis, the existential histrio.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express, here, my gratitude to all those people, without whose help and encouragement this thesis could not have been written. I am much indebted to Dr. Wilcocks, whose ironic criticism, at once witty and incisive, saved me from my worst excesses. I am the richer for having worked under him. I am also grateful to Professor P.L. Knight and to Jeremy Jones for many illuminating discussions. I should acknowledge, too, my debt of gratitude to the two institutions whose awards allowed me to devote my attention exclusively to my research: The Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Trust, and the Government of the Province of Alberta.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE 1

CHAPTER

I INTRODUCTION: THE SOCIAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND . . . 9

II THE ARTIST-FUNAMBULE ON THE STAGE OF LIFE 48

III THE ARTIST-JONGLEUR AS ROMANTIC IRONIST, OR THE GAME OF LUDIC LUCIDITY 113

IV SOCIAL AND AESTHETIC ACROBATICS 205

V THE ARTIST-HISTRIO, OR THE MAGIC THEATRE OF AESTHETIC CONSCIOUSNESS 283

VI EPILOGUE 365

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 366

APPENDICES 406

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

P.	References to Baudelaire's works are from the *Oeuvres complètes* in the *Bibliothèque de la Pléiade* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), edited by Y.-G. Le Dantec, and revised by C. Pichois. The italics in the text, whether they be those of Baudelaire or of another author, are copied from the original, unless otherwise stated.
Corr.	References to Baudelaire's correspondence are from his *Correspondance* in the *Bibliothèque de la Pléiade* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), edited by C. Pichois.

> . . . que notre regard est borné! qu'il s'arrête vite! qu'il ressemble à un pâle flambeau allumé un moment au milieu d'une nuit immense! et comme celui qui avait le plus à coeur de connaître son objet, qui mettait le plus d'ambition à le saisir et le plus d'orgueil à le peindre, se sent impuissant et au-dessous de sa tâche, le jour où la voyant à peu près terminée, et le résultat obtenu, l'ivresse de sa force s'apaise, où la défaillance finale et l'inévitable dégoût le gagnent, et où il s'aperçoit à son tour qu'il n'est qu'une illusion des plus fugitives au sein de l'Illusion infinie!
>
> Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*[1]

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>
> Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*[1]

PREFACE

"Baudelaire, tel un Pierrot sur son bec-de-gaz parisien, plus près de la lune en prophète moqué, est à cheval sur le versant de deux âges, écartelé, souffrant." What possible relevance could this description, by Deguy,[2] of Baudelaire-as-clown have for our understanding of Baudelaire? The juxtaposition is worth making, for Baudelaire may be conceived as a type of "Pierrot de la lune" --- not in the sentimental sense of the phrase, but rather in the respect that he assumes the rôle of the mad prophet. Indeed, Baudelaire says as much about himself:

> Quant à moi qui sens quelquefois en moi le ridicule d'un prophète, je sais que je n'y trouverai jamais la charité d'un médecin. Perdu dans ce vilain monde, coudoyé par les foules, je suis comme un homme lassé dont l'oeil ne voit en arrière, dans les années profondes, que désabusement et amertume, et devant lui qu'un orage où rien de neuf n'est contenu, ni enseignement, ni douleur. (Fusées, P., 1264)

The concept of Baudelaire-as-clown is extremely complex because of its literary and historical implications. In Baudelaire, there is a dense network of clown-associated images, in which the bouffon is the dominant presence. The associational clusters grouped around the bouffon include such metaphors as the saltimbanque, the Pierrot, the Polichinelle, the jongleur, the funambule, the cabotin and the histrio.

Despite the vast critical industry surrounding Baudelaire, there are relatively few critics who have examined sufficiently the bouffon theme or who have acknowledged the capital importance of this theme not only for our appreciation of the poet but as well for our understanding of the very nature of artistic creation. Whilst freely admitting Baudelaire's cabotin legend,[3] the critics make no attempt to correlate it with the symbol of the bouffon and the complex of clown-associated images which permeate Baudeliare's entire oeuvre. Leyreloup, following Poulet and Richard, attempts to define the transmutation of euphoric space into dysphoric space through the symbol of the clown-saltimbanque: "Dans cette perspective, l'art va apparaître de plus en plus nettement comme mensonge ou illusion. Tout espoir d'unité aboli, toute réalité transcendentale refusée, le poète devient clown ou prostitué."[4] Yet, convincing as this argument may appear, it is limited to the extent that it does not take into consideration the many types of clown figure in the Baudelairian universe. Pia[5] devotes a rather scant chapter in his biographically oriented study of the poet to "l'art sublime du comédien": the non-analytical juxtaposition of certain prose texts concerning the theatre, such as "Les Vocations" or "La Morale du joujou," is both limited in scope and lacking in any synthetic awareness which might situate this specific metaphor in the réseau. Chambers'[6] study bearing the same title is a much more serious work. It deals with the failure of the poet-as-actor, his inability to sacralize his art, and his subsequent condemnation of himself as charlatan and prostitute. Fowlie,[7] undoubtedly influenced by the studies of Eliot[8] and du Bos,[9] deals, in his collected work entitled Clowns and Angels, with the spiritual impotence, the thwarted idealism of the essentially christian poet. Zaubitzer's[10] rather disappointing study entitled "Clownmetaphern bei Baudelaire, Mallarmé und Michaux" explicates one of Baudelaire's prose poems: "Le Vieux Saltimbanque;" it is, according to Zaubitzer, both an aesthetic and a metaphysical allegory in which both the suffering of the poet and the vanitas of the world are symbolized. With Mauron,[11] we find a more detailed and systematic approach to the theme of "histrionisme," which, as he explains, is but one of three obsessive metaphors --- the other two being poverty and prostitution. The three are inextricably intertwined and transcribe the impotent rage of the artist in the figure of the "histrion déchu." The scope of his study is, however, limited to Les Petits Poèmes en prose. Rubin's[12] survey of clown types (bouffons, Pierrots and saltimbanques) in nineteenth-century French literature has been invaluable to this study. The section devoted to Baudelaire presents the clown as a symbol of self-doubt and failure; only the more obvious clown poems, such as "La Muse vénale," "Le Vieux Saltimbanque," "Le Fou et la Vénus" and "Une Mort héroïque," come under the critical purview of his presentation. My major debt is to Starobinski.[13] From the socio-historical point of view, the clown is, according to Starobinski, the symbol of évasion in a progressist, industrialist society. As mythical figure, both surhomme and soushomme, the clown represents the often contradictory emotions which the nineteenth-century artist recognized within himself and in the public's attitude towards him. The clown is, ultimately, a caricatural self-portrait of the artist in which is symbolized the derisory epiphany of both art and artist. In a sense, this study begins where Starobinski leaves off.

The Romantic poet was essentially out of harmony with his age --- the age of the banker and the speculator: this fact is reflected in the extravagant, dislocated, unstable and often desperate quality of his art and his personality.[14] He felt a profound sense of alienation in a bourgeois, mercantile civilization and sought urgently for serenity and fulfilment through his art. Although socially emancipated, he had not yet achieved economic emancipation. The corruption of his art, become a commodity to be sold in the market place, the failure to maintain his integrity, led to a hysterical type of clowning, the striking of poses and, above all, a savage irony, directed not only against society but, more importantly, against himself. The clown, as caricatural self-portrait of the artist, thus comes to symbolize the artist's sense of social ostracism, as well as his bitter sense of having failed in his art: he is but a "little charley-chaplin man"[15] exhausting his life in histrionic clowning in his pathetic attempt to capture Beauty. In Baudelaire's case the problem is compounded by his miserable life, his self-disgust, his perpetual insecurity and anguish, his sense of always living on the metaphysical run. Reading his biography, one has the sense that his life was a single, sustained and precarious balancing act: he was the metaphysical *funambule par excellence*, the tragi-comic clown, the lord of misrule. Yet although, in his works, the clown is primarily an Id figure[16] associated with folly and the irrational and expressing the repressed instincts, the uncivilized impulses which lurk beneath the veneer of cultivated man, it comes ultimately to represent the dis-ease of consciousness and subsequently the pathology of aesthetic creation: it is, in the final analysis, an interrogation of the existential drama of the creative act --- of both the poet and his art.

NOTES

[1] Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal* (Paris: Hachette, 1912), VI, 245-246.

[2] M. Deguy, "L'Esthétique de Baudelaire," *Critique*, 243-244 (1967), 695.

[3] Cf. (i) A.E. Carter, *Baudelaire et la critique française: 1868-1917* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1963); (ii) J.-P. Sartre, *Baudelaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963); (iii) A. de Jonge, *Baudelaire: Prince of Clouds* (New York: Paddington Press, 1976).

[4] H. Leyreloup, "Baudelaire: Portrait du poète en saltimbanque," *Revue du Pacifique*, 2 (1976), 41;

[5] P. Pia, *Baudelaire* (Paris: Seuil, 1952).

[6] R. Chambers, "'L'Art sublime du comédien' ou le regardant et le regardé: Autour d'un mythe baudelairien," *Saggi e Richerche di Letteratura Francese*, 11 (Rome: Bulzoni, 1971), 189-260.

[7] W. Fowlie, "Charles Baudelaire: The Experience of Religious Heroism." *Clowns and Angels: Studies in Modern French Literature* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1943), pp. 93-111.

[8] T.S. Eliot, "Baudelaire," in *T.S. Eliot: Selected Prose* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1953), pp. 185-196.

[9] C. du Bos, "Meditation on the Life of Baudelaire," in *Baudelaire: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. H. Peyre (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 38-66.

[10] H. Zaubitzer, "Clownmetaphern bei Baudelaire, Mallarmé und Michaux," *Die Neuren Sprachen*, 15 (1966), 445-456.

[11] C. Mauron, Le Dernier Baudelaire (Paris: Corti, 1966).

[12] V.L. Rubin, "Clowns in Nineteenth-Century French Literature: Buffoons, Pierrots and Saltimbanques," Diss. University of California, Berkeley 1971.

[13] J. Starobinski: (i) "Note sur le bouffon romantique," Cahiers du Sud, 61 (1966), 270-275; (ii) "Sur quelques répondants allégoriques du poète," Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, 67 (1967), 402-412; (iii) Portrait de l'artiste en saltimbanque (Geneva: Skira, 1970).

[14] Cf. A. de Jonge, op. cit., p. 7: "Indeed, as we look back on the major artists of the late nineteenth century, poets such as Rimbaud and Verlaine or painters like Van Gogh, we can see a pattern of disaster, addiction and insanity running through their lives. The art of that time was born of disaster, as if the artist who sought to capture its spirit could only do so by stretching his nerves beyond breaking point and building his art from the pieces of a shattered self. The figure of the damned artist, addict, neurotic or worse has come to dominate the history of 'Western' art for the last 150 years. Witness our own moderns --- Fitzgerald, Sylvia Plath, Dylan Thomas.... It is a tradition inaugurated in Europe by Charles Baudelaire."

[15] L. Ferlinghetti, "Constantly Risking Absurdity," A Coney Island of the Mind (New York: New Directions, 1958), p. 30.

[16] E. Welsford, "The Lord of Misrule," The Fool: His Social and Literary History (Gloucester, Mass.: Smith, 1966), pp. 199-219.

> Clown, abattant dans la risée, dans
> le grotesque, dans l'esclaffement,
> le sens que contre toute lumière je
> m'étais fait de mon importance.
> Henri Michaux, "Le Clown"[1]

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE SOCIAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND

There is no Clown, suggests Enid Welsford,[2] there are only clowns. There is, however, a clown "myth"; this is an essentially Romantic development which receives its full significance when viewed in the light of its clown ancestry. Whilst the Romantics were visibly influenced by the popular entertainment of the period, the fairground theatres, the carnivals, the circuses, the pantomimes and various other heterogeneous entertainments of the *Boulevard du Temple*, which flourished on the fringes of the theatre world proper, the syncretic nature of the Romantic imagination did not remain unresponsive to the multifarious prior manifestations of the clown theme: Attellan farce; the historical court jesters and buffoons of the Renaissance; Erasmus' *Folly*; the Elizabethan fool; the Spanish *gracioso*; Callot's grotesque depictions of the stock characters of the *commedia dell'arte* in his *Balli di Sfessani*; the Harlequins, *Pierrots*, Pantaloons, Colombinas and other stock characters of the *commedia* proper, or as metamorphosed by Marivaux and Gozzi or etherealized by Watteau, Gillot and various other eighteenth-century painters of *fêtes galantes*--these are but some members of the vast clown family. In *Le Neveu de Rameau*, we have *in ovo* the theme of the social *déclassé*, the man of genius as pariah and clown--"un cri répété par mille sentinelles" throughout the Romantic period, and best typified by Fantasio, whose social malaise is, however, indicative of a much deeper Weltschmerz.[3] The theme of the outcast is again reflected in the picturesque romany world, for which the Romantic artist found special affinities. Describing Baudelaire's attraction towards the bohemian world, Füglister explains: "Les bohémiens et les saltimbanques sont pour Baudelaire les représentants les plus marquants de ces méconnus de l'art. Le poète découvre en eux la préfiguration, ou mieux encore, l'image de l'artiste en marge de la société."[4]

The twentieth century, too, is rich in clown manifestations: Picasso's saltimbanques of the blue period; Ensor's strangely carnavalesque world, haunted by grimacing Pierrots; Chagall's odd, dislocated Acrobate. The theme of the acrobat is again reflected in Genet's[5] analytical portrait of the "funambule." The clown theme is one which is very much in evidence in both the literature and films of the twentieth century: whether in Heinrich Böll's tragic novel entitled The Clown; in Samuel Beckett's clownish tramps of En attendant Godot; in Ghelderode's masterly psychological drama Escurial; in Louis Johnson's highly Romantic poem "The Comedian":

> Climbing the golden stairs, he'd surely trip
> And rip the wings off angels as he fell.[6]

In Bergman's early film Sawdust and Tinsel, we find the Romantic theme of the social pariahdom of the artist-clown, a theme to be repeated, although with greater complexity, in The Hour of the Wolf, where society's derision of the artist is symbolized in almost Mallarméan terms, via the dissolution of the artist's mask become the "rance nuit de la peau." The tragic and derisory nature of the clown's rôle is again evident in Josef von Sternberg's adaptation of Heinrich Mann's novel, Der Blaue Engel. In Chaplin's films, we see the original ritual function of the clown as bringer of salvation,[7] the buffoon whose mischief paradoxically brings order into a chaotic world. In Chaplin, we find also the social déclassé, somewhat like the zanni of the commedia, who has something of the wily Harlequin about him despite his more sentimental nature. A similar ritual function of the clown may be seen in the Marx brothers, where a topsy-turvy world of their own creation is brought to order through their providential disruptions. The archetype of the irreverent mischiefmaker is perhaps to be found in that Rabelaisian creation of German origin--Eulenspiegel, whose merry pranks inspired the tone-poem of Richard Strauss, as well as the burlesque epic novel of the Belgian, Charles de Coster (which, incidentally, was published in 1867, although not appreciated until the 1880's). Jacques Copeau and the Théâtre du vieux colombier, Charles Dullin, Louis Jouvet, Marcel Marceau and Jean-Louis Barrault, are but some of the artists whose theatrical endeavours testify to the survival of the commedia in the twentieth century.[8]

If the clown is such a diversely suggestive figure, it is not only because he is the bringer of salvation, but, more specifically, because he is, as Starobinski remarks, the "maître d'un passage mystérieux,"[9] whose passage beyond the real world entails an implicit questioning of both world and self. It is, in fact, this flux or distanciation between real and unreal, between meaningful and meaningless which constitutes the essential function of the clown as questioner of the world.[10] Even though it may seem somewhat paradoxical to make a symbol of the very absence of signification, this "viduity" (as Beckett would say), this non-sense captures the essential multivalency not only of the clown symbol, but, moreover, of the symbol itself in its protest against fossilized and positivist modes of thought:

> Dans un monde utilitaire, parcouru par le réseau serré des relations signifiantes, dans un univers pratique où tout s'est vu assigner une fonction, une valeur d'usage et d'échange, l'entrée du clown fait craquer quelques mailles du réseau, et, dans la plénitude étouffante des significations acceptées, il ouvre une brèche par où pourra courir un vent d'inquiétude.[11]

Although the commedia in France had lost its royal patronage and been suppressed in 1780, Pierrots, Arlequins, and Colombines were still very much in evidence in the nineteenth century, surviving, much as Callot had depicted them two centuries before, in the fairground shows, boulevard trestles and various other forms of popular entertainment. In fact, the Consulate and Empire periods witnessed, as Book-Senninger[12] points out, a renaissance of the commedia, its stock characters having percolated into every facet of entertainment on the boulevards, whether in the melodramas, the farces, the vaudevilles, the operettas, the pantomimes-arlequinades or the mimodrames, at Nicolet's Gaîté, at Audinot's Ambiguë, at Montansier's Palais Royal, at the Gymnase, at the Vaudeville, at the Porte-Saint-Martin, at the Variétés and above all at the Funambules. The "franche bouffonnerie,"[13] as Gautier calls it, of the original fairgrounds of Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent was very much alive, even though some writers of the period, such as Nerval[14] and de Villarceaux,[15] felt that the magical qualities of this popular art were being destroyed by that all-pervasive bourgeois entertainment, the vaudeville[16]:

> Debureau résiste encore avec la puissance de la tradition et du talent, mais le vaudeville l'envahit de tous côtés, et lui dispute ses propres planches; ainsi l'art populaire, la farce naïve, la gaîté saine et franche du peuple disparaissent devant la comédie bâtarde de la société bourgeoise.[14]

Gaspard Deburau (1796-1846) was, indeed, an all-important factor in the new interest generated in the figures of Italian comedy, and contributed significantly both to the survival and evolution of the Pierrot figure in the nineteenth century. In his hands, the rôle of Pierrot was radically renewed: although not at first playing any decisive part in the action, such as it was, Pierrot took on a much more positive and aggressive character (it will be remembered that in previous centuries it was Arlequin who had the most prominent part, while Pierrot remained the cringing zany):

> Avec lui, le rôle de Pierrot s'était élargi, agrandi; il avait fini par occuper toute la pièce, et . . . par s'éloigner de son origine et se dénaturer. Pierrot, sous la farine et la cassaque de l'illustre bohémien, prenait des airs de maître et un aplomb qui ne lui convenait pas; il donnait des coups de pied et n'en recevait plus; c'est à peine si Arlequin osait lui effleurer les épaules de sa batte.[17]

Given the fact that Deburau's interpretation of Pierrot at the Funambules was evolving at the very time when Hugo was defining his notion of the grotesque, and also introducing the figure of the buffoon into French Romantic theatre with such plays as Cromwell and Le Roi s'amuse, it follows that Deburau should be seen as a symbol of the bas monde in the form of the proletariat, however incongruous this may seem with the fantasy world of the commedia. Janin, continuing the confusion which had arisen in the eighteenth century between Gilles and Pierrot, describes Deburau thus:

> Gilles! Gilles, c'est pas tel ou tel homme avec un nom propre ou une position sociale déterminée; Gilles, c'est le peuple. Gilles, tour à tour joyeux, triste, malade, bien portant, battant, battu, musicien, poète, niais, toujours pauvre comme est le peuple, c'est le peuple que Deburau représente dans tous ses drames.[18]

Realism and fantasy combine, as Deburau's somewhat macabre Pierrot sets fire to wigs with studied malevolence (one is reminded, here, of Poe's "Hopfrog," first published in 1849), and in general surrenders to every mad or ignoble impulse, in the true spirit of pantomime. Yet, despite this furious activity, Deburau remains, strangely enough, a kind of impassive dandy: we turn, once again, to Janin for a description of Deburau:

> Pierrot est d'un sang-froid admirable. . . . Il faut voir le comédien avec ses lèvres pincées, son attitude indécise, son sourire railleur, son air qu'il sait rendre si admirablement stupide; il faut le voir exposé à la pluie, tenant tête à l'orage, s'engraissant dans les cuisines, battant, battu, assassinant, assassiné, ne s'étonnant de rien, pas même du boulet rouge qu'il retire de la blessure d'Arlequin. C'est admirable! Jamais acteur n'a paru dans un drame plus compliqué avec plus d'énergie, de patience, de sang-froid et d'esprit.[19]

Given Baudelaire's fundamental preoccupation with the figure of the dandy, it is not surprising to find him attracted to Deburau's dandified Pierrot; Vitu[20] notes his presence at the Funambules on the occasion of Champfleury's pantomime Pierrot valet de la mort in 1846, and Champfleury,[21] indeed, considers him to be one of the rare souls capable of appreciating the art of pantomime. In his Salon de 1846, Baudelaire presents, by way of antithesis to Penguilly L'Haridon's Pierrot présente à l'assemblée ses compagnons Arlequin et

Polichinelle, the figure of Deburau, "qui est le vrai Pierrot actuel, le Pierrot de l'histoire moderne, et qui doit avoir sa place dans tous les tableaux de parade" (P., 909).[22] Whilst the frivolity of the commedia characters is here unfavourably contrasted with the refined psychology animating Deburau's Pierrot,[23] in De l'essence du rire of 1855, the reference to "le regrettable Debureau [sic]" (P., 988) contrasts the latter's finesse and discretion with the violent, epileptic qualities of the English pantomime, to the detriment of the former: ". . . là où Debureau [sic] eût trempé le bout du doigt pour le lécher, il [le Pierrot anglais] y plongeait les deux poings et les deux pieds" (P., 989). It is somewhat difficult to reconcile Baudelaire's decidedly contradictory appreciations of Deburau; had he simply changed his mind, or was it that the extravagance of the English pantomime fitted more neatly into his theory of the "comique absolu," and hence his depreciation of Deburau's more subtle art? However, it is by no means certain whether Baudelaire laments Deburau's loss (it will be remembered that he died in 1846) or, in fact, finds his performances lamentable by comparison with the English variety of pantomime; both these interpretations are implied in his subtle use of the adjective "regrettable."

Although Baudelaire does not refer specifically to Deburau in his Salon de 1845, he does, nevertheless, describe in detail one of the little boulevard theatres (P., 843). It is of importance to note also Baudelaire's enthusiasm for Aloysius Bertrand's Gaspard de la nuit (published posthumously in 1842), the full title of which, it will be remembered, is Gaspard de la nuit--à la manière de Rembrandt et *de Callot*. The most important *commedia* poem of this work is the prose poem entitled "La Viole de gamba," which, incidentally, bears close resemblance to Gautier's "Carnaval de Venise" (1849). Baudelaire's attraction towards "L'admirable Hoffmann" (P., 992) can also be explained in the light of the *commedia*.

Baudelaire was not only attracted to the pantomimes at the *Funambules*, but also had certain affinities for the marionettes, in particular *Polichinelle*: indeed, he had planned on writing a "Canevas" for his friend Duranty's marionette theatre.[24] The marionette, as we shall demonstrate, is but one of the *bouffon* resonances in Baudelaire's work. Not only was Baudelaire attracted to these contemporaneous manifestations of the *commedia*, but, from his correspondence, we also know that he was aware of something of their history: speaking about a certain catalogue of eighteenth-century works, he states:

> Je relève avec soin les noms vraiment importants: Fréron, Grosley, le Jansénisme . . . Nicolet, Audinot (excellents), . . . Uleyspiegel (mal orthographié).[25]

Baudelaire was not alone in appreciating the *Funambules* and Deburau. From the late twenties onwards, a few writers, poets and artists had begun to penetrate the squalid little *Funambules* theatre, despite its "atmosphère méphitique"[26] and its thoroughly working-class audience. The attraction towards the "popular" was, after all, in keeping with the spirit of Romanticism. Janin acclaims this plebeian form of entertainment in Hugolian fashion:

> Donc, ne dédaignons aucune face de l'Art; ne passons sous silence aucun de ses accidens, aucun de ses hasards. L'histoire du Bas-Empire, après l'histoire de la vieille

> Rome, n'est pas sans intérêt et sans mouvement. Puisque la comédie en est au Bas-Empire, faisons l'Histoire de l'Art tel qu'il est, crotté, crasseux, mendiant, ivrogne, remuant un Parterre crotté, crasseux, mendiant et ivrogne.[27]

In 1828, the critic Charles Nodier "discovered" Deburau, and brought Nerval, Gautier and other leaders of the new Romantic school to applaud the mime. He also contributed the pantomime *Le Songe d'or*, which achieved so great a success that the names of Deburau and Laurent (playing *Arlequin* to Deburau's *Pierrot*) became known all over Paris. *Marchand de salade* (1829), *Ma Mère l'oie* (1830) and *Les Vingt-Six Infortunes de Pierrot* (1830) were further triumphs for Deburau, while Laurent's fortunes began to dim. It was in the 1820's, too, that Mazurier (1793-1828) popularized the rôle of *Polichinelle* with his *ballets-pantomimes*, such as *Polichinelle vampire* (1823), at the *Porte-Saint-Martin*.

Jules Janin's *Deburau: Histoire du théâtre à quatre sous* (1832) firmly tied the *Funambules* in the public mind with its illustrious *Pierrot* and thereby helped to establish him as an institution. The book created quite a stir at the time: according to Arsène Houssaye, in the preface which he wrote for the 1881 edition of the book, the respectable, middle-class play-goer was both shocked and titillated that the high-brow critic should be interested in the life and adventures of a moneyless fleapit mime. Janin's book, essentially a Romantic vamping-up of Deburau's life to suit a Romantic persona, marks the beginning of what may be called the legend of Deburau and the "cult" of the pantomime. Moreover, Janin's insistence on seeing in Deburau's *Pierrot* a symbol, marks a significant point in the evolution of the Pierrot figure in the nineteenth century: Pierrot was no longer the legendary farcical type whose sole function, with his gross parody of human relationships, was to amuse the vulgar crowd: Pierrot, on account of the new scholarly interest in an essentially popular genre, took on a new philosophical content.

Thus for Gautier, Pierrot came to represent the tortured idealism of the Romantic generation. Describing the extraordinarily successful pantomime of Cot d'Ordan entitled Marrrchand d'habits, which, incidentally, is the one depicted in Marcel Carné's film Les Enfants du paradis, he explains:

> Pierrot, qui se promène dans la rue avec sa casaque blanche, son pantalon blanc, sa figure enfarinée, préoccupé de vagues désirs, n'est-ce pas la symbolisation de l'âme humaine encore innocente et blanche, tourmentée d'aspirations infinies vers les régions supérieures.[28]

However, Gautier later (presumably on account of the social upheavals of 1848) came to see Pierrot as a socio-political symbol representing the proletariat. In fact, Gautier makes the popular entertainment of the pantomime support a whole philosophy of life, the stereotyped figures of the commedia representing a microcosm of the human condition:

> La pantomime est la vraie comédie humaine, et, bien qu'elle n'emploie pas deux mille personnages, comme celle de M. de Balzac, elle n'en est pas moins complète. Avec quatre ou cinq types, elle suffit à tout. Cassandre représente la famille; Léandre, le bellâtre stupide et cossu qui agrée aux parents; Colombine, l'idéal, la Béatrix, le rêve poursuivi, la fleur de jeunesse et de beauté; Arlequin, museau de singe et corps de serpent, avec son masque noir, ses lozanges bigarrés, sa pluie de paillettes, l'amour, l'esprit, la mobilité, l'audace, toutes les qualités et tous les vices brillants; Pierrot, pâle, grêle, vêtu d'habits blafards, toujours affamé et toujours battu, l'esclave antique, le prolétaire moderne, le paria, l'être passif et déshérité qui assiste, morne et sournois, aux orgies et aux folies de ses maîtres.[29]

It was not, however, any particular philosophy of life that attracted the artists and writers to the Funambules, but rather the poetic quality of the pantomimes-arlequinades-féeries offered there, which, for them, were a kind of "invitation au voyage," the means by which to "plonger avec une effroyable joie dans le monde éblouissant de la féerie,"[30] as Banville puts it. It was essentially, as Lataye[31] explains in 1859, an escape into a world of pure fantasy which, for the Romantic generation, was undoubtedly associated with the name of Shakespeare,[32] which in turn conjured up the world of the théâtres forains, as well as the fairy world of Watteau's fêtes champêtres. Lataye describes the commedia as follows:

> Vous verrez se grouper autour d'elle [la commedia] tous les esprits inquiets, toutes les âmes mécontentes de la réalité, ces poètes, ces musiciens, ces peintres, qui ne peuvent saisir leur idéal que dans le rêve et l'hallucination. C'est elle qui leur ouvre les portes des régions fantastiques où ils s'égarent...[31]

Whilst considered by some as a form of escapism from the bourgeois, positivist tenets of the nineteenth century, others saw in the contemporary commedia an exaltation of the material aspects in man: the greed and lasciviousness of Pantaloon; the material appetites of both Pierrot and Arlequin; in short the "prosaïques jouissances de la matière" of these stock characters were seen to correspond with the conspicuously materialist ideals of the nineteenth century, for, as Frédéric Mercey explains in the caustic conclusion to his series of articles on the "comédie italienne" in 1840:

> . . . ces types . . . ne nous sont pas absolument étrangers; ils nous font merveilleusement connaître le noble idéal que se proposent nos sociétés matérialistes, le but vers lequel nous tendons.[33]

In somewhat similar vein, although insisting, rather, on the inversely proportional nature of the utilitarian credo and escapist art, de Villarceaux explains thus the decline of the commedia in the nineteenth century:

> . . . l'esprit fantastique forcée de céder la place à l'esprit terre à terre qui commençait à s'emparer de nous. Nous sommes maintenant une nation positive; le développement des choses de l'industrie a mis du lest dans notre frivolité et amorti notre amour du caprice.[34]

Well before Gaspard Deburau died in 1846, traditional pantomime had fallen on hard times due to the ever-increasing invasion of vaudeville. Pantomime struggled on, however, with intermittent success for a number of years longer. Champfleury attempted, in the late 1840's, to resuscitate the genre with three Pierrot pantomimes (Pierrot valet de la mort [1846]; Pierrot pendu; Pierrot marquis [1847]) emphasizing the comic macabre--thus paving the way for the cruel and sadistic black Pierrots of the fin de siècle. Gautier's Pierrot posthume, a one-act arlequinade presenting a naïve type of Pierrot, appeared at the Vaudeville in 1847, and in the same year he wrote, for the Funambules, a scenario entitled Pierrot en Espagne.

Deburau's son Charles, who followed in his father's footsteps at the Funambules, offered a very different type of Pierrot figure: drained of the brutal vitality of Gaspard, Charles was in life, as well as on stage, a neurotic, slender, sickly figure--again, we see in embryo certain qualities of the fin de siècle Pierrot. Legrand, another Pierrot of the mid-century, however, developed the character of Pierrot along sentimental lines. In 1850, we find three Pierrots appearing together at the Funambules in the pantomime by Auguste

Jouhaud, Les Trois Pierrots, in which Charles Deburau and Paul Legrand were joined by another well known mime, Alexandre Guyon. Although the Funambules theatre was demolished in 1862 with the "Haussmannization" of Paris, pantomime experienced a pseudo-renaissance in the late 1880's with the formulation of the Cercle funambulesque, founded by Félix Larcher, Paul Margueritte, Raoul de Najac, Léon Hennique, J.-K. Huysmans, Jules Cheret, Auguste Vitu, Jean Richepin and others in 1888. Their specific aim was the revival of the traditional commedia as well as its modernization. The commedia was no longer played to popular audiences; having lost the spontaneity of the original commedia in its improvised form, it was now the artificial property of an elite literary coterie.

The Pierrot figure was not merely a theatrical phenomenon, but descended from the stage into everyday life. In the furiously gay masked balls that followed the cholera epidemic of 1832, Maxime du Camp notes among the "déguisements rococos . . . des pierrots, des polichinelles, des arlequins, des colombines et des cassandres."[35] Arsène Houssaye tells how the fun-loving inhabitants of the Doyenné and their friends, "Nodier, Hugo, Gautier, Gérard, Ourliac, Rogier et moi . . . nous avions improvisé des pantomimes dans le château de la Bohème, rue du Doyenné, mais c'était à huis clos."[36] We see here the Romantic coincidence of life and theatre, as exemplified in Mlle de Maupin.[37] Explaining in his preface what stimulated him to write his work entitled Masques et bouffons (1860), Maurice Sand reveals that, twelve years prior to the publication of his book, he and a group of friends had gathered together at Nohant with the specific aim of acting scenarios from the commedia; this would be roughly around the time of Champfleury's attempted revival of the pantomime, at a time when Baudelaire also appears to have been interested in this genre. It was in the 1840's, too, that a series of faïence dishes appeared representing a Pierrot who bore a tolerable resemblance to the older Deburau; their manufacture continued right until the end of the nineteenth century.

The commedia migrated into the nineteenth century not only by the theatrical route, but also by the rediscovery of Watteau by a small group of artists and critics in the 1840's, such as Arsène Houssaye, Léon Gozlan, Paul Hédouin and Champfleury, for whom Watteau, much in the same way as Shakespeare came to represent the merveilleux, became a manifold symbol of the possibility of evasion into a dream world of grace and beauty.[38] From 1841, Houssaye[39] had recognized the magic spell cast by the poet-painter of the fêtes galantes. Baudelaire, too, in his Salon de 1846, evokes an ethereal vision:

> Quant au paysage de fantaisie, qui est l'expression de la rêverie humaine, l'égoïsme humain substitué à la nature, il fut peu cultivé. Ce génie singulier, dont Rembrandt, Rubens, Watteau et quelques livres d'étrennes anglais offrent les meilleurs exemples et qui est en petit l'analogue des belles décorations de l'opéra, représente le besoin naturel du merveilleux. (P., 936)

However, the vision darkens in "Les Phares" (1857), where the graceful figures, whirling against unreal landscapes in a theatrical fairyland are enigmatically shrouded in the mists of insanity:

> Watteau, ce carnaval où bien des coeurs illustres
> Comme des papillons, errent en flamboyant,
> Décors frais et légers éclairés par des lustres
> Qui versent la folie à ce bal tournoyant. (P., 13)

Indeed, the melancholy of Puget in the preceding quatrain, and the nightmare qualities associated with Goya in the following, seem strangely synthesized in Baudelaire's darkly luminous evocation. The essential ambiguity of Baudelaire's depiction of Watteau is condensed in the term "flamboyant," which suggests both the brilliant attire of the masqueraders, as well as the dissolution which threatens the revellers (the insects are incinerated in a blaze of glory): carnival night has become _Walpurgisnacht_. Although more sombre, we have in essence, here, the melancholia so typical of Verlaine's _Fêtes galantes_.

Gautier,[40] too, was cognizant of the high seriousness behind the apparent frivolity. Hédouin,[41] on the other hand, pointedly criticized the frivolous genre in which Watteau excelled. The Goncourts' article entitled "La Philosophie de Watteau," which appeared in _L'Artiste_ in 1856 and was later modified for its inclusion in their _Portraits intimes du dix-huitième siècle_ (1857) and in the second fascicule of _L'Art du dix-huitième siècle_ (1860), affirms the nineteenth-century recognition of Watteau as the poet-painter of "paysages idéalisés," thus echoing the appreciations of the forties. More importantly, their preface to the latter work emphasizes the melancholia with which the seemingly enchanted world is infused:

> C'est l'amour; mais c'est l'amour poétique, l'amour qui songe et qui pense, l'amour moderne, avec ses aspirations et sa couronne de mélancolie. Oui, au fond de cette oeuvre de Watteau, je ne sais quelle lente et vague harmonie murmure derrière les paroles rieuses; je ne sais quelle tristesse musicale et doucement contagieuse est répandue dans ces fêtes galantes.[42]

The malaise underlying the vision of the fêtes galantes foreshadows, in many respects, the development of the Pierrot figure in the nineteenth century.

Another feature in Watteau, which the Romantics found appealing, was the fundamental ambiguity of his works where theatricality[43] unites with reality in equivocal synthesis. Indeed, it is not easy to discern whether his works represent naturalized theatrics or theatricalized nature. Do they represent a theatrical scene in a natural setting, or a fête champêtre with theatrical personnages? It will be remembered, also, that Watteau's depiction of commedia characters was already a stylized optic, learnt from his master Gillot, which gave to the nineteenth century a prettified version of the commedia's history. Baudelaire's histrionic aesthetics will be seen to hinge precisely on this equivocal dialectic.

It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that the commedia migrates from the world of popular entertainment into the world of art and literature. Gavarni's Ecole des Pierrots, his Pierrots strangely reminiscent of Tiepolo's Pulcinellas, would appear to reflect the prominence, in mid-century, of this character on the boulevards. Daumier, in turn, focused on the plight of the fairground artist in his series of saltimbanque drawings: his failure to attract a public (Le Saltimbanque); his incomprehension by that public (La Parade); the homelessness of the eternal pariah (Le Déplacement des saltimbanques); the ironic, quasi-divine, almost lunatic inspiration of this lowly histrion (Bajazzo and Le Clown)--features which will, as we shall see, be synthesized in Baudelaire's tragic

"Vieux Saltimbanque." We should also mention, at this point, Grandville's marvellous allegorical cartoon of the artist-as-bouffon in Un Autre Monde (1844), where we see the artist, half man and half fool's cap, pass through a pencil-gateway to freedom.[44]

The appearance of the clown in serious French literature is inextricably linked with the development of Romanticism in the nineteenth century. Echoing Stendhal's Racine et Shakespeare, Baudelaire, in his Salon de 1846, defines Romanticism thus:

> Qui dit romantisme dit art moderne, --c'est-à-dire intimité, spiritualité, couleur, aspiration vers l'infini, exprimées par tous les moyens que contiennent les arts. (P., 879)

Enumerated here are some of the major aspects of this heterogeneous movement : firstly, the insistence on modernity, that is to say a rejection of the classical tenets restricting choice of subject matter, thus leaving the artist free to elect, if he so chooses, low or trivial subjects which had hitherto been taboo. Hence the attraction towards the popular arts. Champfleury, in his Souvenirs des Funambules (1859) expresses thus his deliberately anti-classical stance:

> Je crois très-utile aujourd'hui d'imprimer une fois de plus cette belle prose, qui se plaît, tout aristocratique qu'elle soit, à descendre dans les lieux les plus malsains, et qui ne dédaigne pas de s'encanailler en narrant avec complaisance les exploits des hercules de foires, des clowns du Cirque, des marionnettes, des animaux savants, des paradeurs de tout espèce.[45]

The popular arts embodied, for the Romantics, not only this aspect of modernity, but also the nostalgic primitivism, which perceived in the popular arts a vital source of spontaneity, of primal inspiration unsullied by the classical constraints. The picturesque and colourful fairground, with its strongly visual impact, appealed, moreover, to the Romantics, not only on account of its material presence, but more especially on account of its powers of suggestion: the motley world of the kermis was the symbol, par excellence, of the Romantic desire for evasion, the "aspiration vers l'infini," in a world dominated by materialism; "le monde du cirque et de la fête foraine," explains Starobinski, "représentait, dans l'atmosphère charbonneuse d'une société en voie d'industrialisation, un flot chatoyant de merveilleux."[46] The fairground became, in fact, the symbol of poetry in a mundane and prosaic universe: in the words of Banville:

> Les Funambules existent nécessairement, parce qu'ils répondent à un besoin de l'esprit; ce besoin de rompre violemment avec la prose de la vie réelle pour se reposer et errer au hasard dans le poëme d'une comédie idéale.[47]

The basic grimness of the real fairground, with its stark images of poverty and destitution, was, in the final instance, transmogrified by a picturesque focus into a magical world apart.

Hugo's presentation of the complexity of the individual in his theories on Romantic drama, again displays the Romantic proclivity towards antithesis. The manifest purport of the drame was, as he explains in his Préface de Cromwell, to depict life in its totality, or, more exactly, to express the contrasts and complexities of a world which contains both spirit and matter, good and evil, beauty and ugliness:

> Le drame . . . fond sous un même souffle le grotesque et le sublime, le terrible et le bouffon, la tragédie et la comédie.[48]

The profoundly ambivalent position of the clown[49]--whether in the form of the degraded saltimbanque whose spangled finery belies his inward suffering, or the court buffoon whose virtual nullity ironically blunts his apparent license--offered infinite antithetical, and more especially ironic possibilities. Simultaneously surhomme and sous-homme, the paradoxical nature of the clown seemed to offer parallels with the position in society of the Romantic artist, who was, at one and the same time mage and pariah. "Durant le dix-neuvième siècle," writes Leiris, "parallèlement au mythe de l'artiste demiurge . . . il y a un mythe de l'artiste bafoué. . . . Selon la perspective qui est celle du romantisme et de ses prolongements modernes, l'artiste est toujours hors du commun, par excès ou par défaut: dieu vainqueur ou supplicié; prophète qui révèle ou insensé dont on se gausse; 'ses ailes de géant l'empêchent de marcher'; seul au monde et s'opposant au monde cet être d'exception a, comme la courtisane, ses splendeurs et ses misères."[50] It is not surprising, therefore, to find the Romantic artist, struggling desperately for recognition in a post-maecenic age, adopting the clown image as a caricatural self-portrait with multiple resonances, not only on the social plane, but more especially on the aesthetic plane, where the fairground comes to symbolize the prostitution of the artist:

> Toutes les fois qu'un grand artiste, poëte, peintre, comédien, musicien, veut bien se livrer au public, montrer son feu, jeter son âme en dehors, il est saltimbanque.[51]

The complexity of man, according to Romantic doctrine, was paralleled by the complexity of art, which no longer had a monistic function, but a pluralistic one embracing a multitude of genres.

Hugo's triumphant exposition of what was to become the Romantic credo, was, in fact, prefigured by the developments which had taken place in the popular theatres in the early decades of the century[52]: his mixing of genres, his disregard of the unities, were already common features of the popular melodramas, as was the interest in local colour, picturesque scenery and spectacle, which was so important a part of both Romantic opera and Romantic drama. Romantic art, indeed, utilized "tous les moyens que contiennent les arts" (P., 879).

The presence of the clown figure in nineteenth century French literature is manifold, whether in the form of the buffoon (a specifically historical manifestation of the type), the *saltimbanque* (a contemporaneous manifestation) or the *Pierrot* (again an essentially modern manifestation, even though endowed with a long and intricate history). Hugo is not alone in his interest in the buffoon: Emile Deschamps had, long before the appearance of *Le Roi s'amuse* in 1832, projected a work entitled *Fou du roi*, of which Hugo himself was aware.[53] The figure of the court fool had also attracted Paul Lacroix, whose novel *Les Deux Fous: Histoire du temps de François I^er^, 1524* appeared in 1830, to be followed by a later treatise entitled *Dissertation sur les fous des rois de France*, published in 1837. Also, the *comédie-vaudeville* of A.H.J. Duveyrier (pseud. Mélesville), entitled *Le Bouffon du prince*, had appeared in 1831, and Roger de Beauvoir's novella *Il Pulcinella* had appeared in 1834.

For Hugo, the buffoon had, as we have noted, special value as a picturesque and dynamic manifestation of the *grotesque*.[54] In his historical drama Cromwell (1827), the buffoons adopt the traditional rôle of the perspicacious fool who shrewdly observes the characters and events which pass before him. Mocking at the world's disorders, they remain, however, dispassionate and indifferent to human affairs. Whilst the buffoons contribute to the general texture of the play, they have no importance from the point of view of the action: they remain on the periphery of events, merely observers and commentators, thus enacting the traditional rôle of the fool as gratuitous creature paradoxically existing within society, and yet not of it.

In Marion Delorme (1829), however, L'Angely, the buffoon of Louis XIII, although essentially uninvolved in the drama which unfolds, is yet integrated, to a greater degree, into the action of the play. He is again the perspicacious fool, with all the astuteness of the buffoons of Cromwell and with the same bent for sardonic observation. In both of these plays, the buffoon necessarily stands apart as the witty and ironic commentator of events, who remains personally uncommitted and thus removed from the centre of the action. It is this essential detachment and impassiveness which guarantees the buffoon's license to impertinence and frank speech, and, more importantly, to immunity. However, once the buffoon becomes embroiled in the intrigue, his promotion to actor in the drama is naturally concomitant with his downfall, as we see in Le Roi s'amuse.

Here, the buffoon becomes the central figure in the play. A Pagliacci-type clown avant la lettre who, while suffering inwardly must conceal his pain, Triboulet is the very embodiment of Romantic antithetical juxtaposition, and, furthermore, represents an evolution in Hugo's conception of the buffoon: the portrayal of a "human" buffoon with his own private existence is very different from the hobgoblin-type buffoons in Cromwell with no possible existence beyond their allotted function at court. Triboulet, on the other hand, is presented as a creature of great complexity, a being with a soul, like Quasimodo, painfully conscious of the depths of his own moral degradation and, moreover, revulsed by his own iniquity. Yet, despite his baseness and infamy, Triboulet retains--a characteristic example of Hugolian paradox--an acute awareness of a spiritual ideal: his love for Blanche is more than a father's love for his daughter; as her name suggests, his love is a symbolic representation of this ideal. In Le Roi s'amuse, Hugo establishes the clown figure as worthy of being the central figure in the play, the hero, and this, it should be noted, not in a comedy, but in a tragic drama.

With Musset's Fantasio (1833), the figure of the buffoon is again a dominant one. However, the character of Fantasio differs from that of Triboulet in as much as Musset enlarges the conception of the buffoon by taking him out of the restricted confines of the court and presenting him in terms of a certain psychology or state of mind, rather than in terms of a specific dramatic function. Fantasio, imbued with that peculiar nineteenth-century ailment known as the mal du siècle, is the incarnation of a spiritual malaise. Once again, we witness the "humanization" of the buffoon: not only does Fantasio ironically mock, with disabused detachment, the ways of the world, but subvert the traditional rôle of the fool as critic of society into an autocritique, expressing his own sense of aimlessness in an essentially gratuitous world. Fantasio observes himself and the world with equal disenchantment. Although elevated to "human" status and profoundly aware of his individuality, Fantasio's sense of his uniqueness as an individual is a painful one, for, unlike the Romantics who felt it to be one of man's glories, it only represented for him man's feeling of fundamental isolation. Bored with his irresponsible existence, Fantasio is painfully aware of his own abdication in the face of life, his utter uselessness to society:

> Remarques-tu une chose, Spark, c'est que nous n'avons pas d'état; nous n'exerçons aucune profession.[55]

We have, here, a tentative hint at that identification of poet and clown which will become so familiar as the century progresses, and which, while still fairly light-hearted here, will, with Baudelaire, become a more sombre expression of the poet's anguished awareness of his own isolation and failure. It will be remembered, however, that the play is, after all, a comedy, and that the badinage of the central figure, Fantasio, dulcifies, in some measure, the tragic import. As with the character of Triboulet, we witness here what Starobinski terms "cette héroïsation romantique du bouffon."[56]

Banville's partiality for the clown figure is well known. Although the epithet "poète funambulesque"[57] has, to a certain extent, been turned against the poet to make of him the superficial, frivolous clown of verbal jugglery, for Banville, the comparison between the poet and the clown was a profoundly serious one, which expressed, in typical nineteenth-century fashion, his ideas on the nature of the poet, his rôle and his destiny.

Many types of clowns appear in Banville's pages. Like many other contemporary writers, he was attracted to the Funambules' mime Deburau, whose name appears on many occasions in his souvenirs. The names of Arlequin, Pierrot, Polichinelle and Colombine appear frequently in his poetry, much of which can be seen in terms of a Watteauesque décor[58]: indeed, he contributed greatly to the idealization of these commedia figures in the nineteenth century. Banville's most extended development of the Pierrot figure occurs in his play Le Baiser (1887), a symbolic fairytale, where the Pierrot figure represents, somewhat unoriginally, the poet's aspiration towards the ideal. However, the Pierrot figure is a minor one in Banville's clown repertory, being superseded by the saltimbanque and the clown-acrobat.

Les Pauvres saltimbanques (1853), a short collection of anecdotes and fantasies, portrays the material sufferings of the impecunious artist-saltimbanque at the hands of an indifferent crowd:

> Les pauvres saltimbanques avaient épuisé tout ce qu'ils savaient, la foule s'était dispersée; on ne leur avait rien donné; ils pleuraient. . . . Voilà l'histoire que je viens d'imaginer, symbole de la vie des artistes.[59]

There would appear to be certain affinities here with Baudelaire's tragic "Vieux Saltimbanque," most notably the explicit comparison between poet and entertainer in both works. Whilst the saltimbanques in Banville's story remain materially unsuccessful, their integrity as artists is never questioned: "qu'est-ce que le saltimbanque, sinon un artiste indépendant et libre."[59] With Baudelaire, however, the clown image raises, among other things, the question of the integrity of the artist who has, to a greater or lesser degree, prostituted his talents, as we shall see in "La Muse vénale."

The affirmative qualities of the clown symbol are found more emphatically in the figure of the clown-acrobat, who, for Banville, expresses physically, via his discipline, grace and agility, what the poet expresses figuratively, in his poetry, by means of rhythm and rhyme. Hence Banville's attraction towards the clown-acrobats, the Hanlon-Lees, compared with whom the lyric poet appears but a poor facsimile:

> Mais contiens-toi, mon coeur! Je ne suis pas un Hanlon-Lees; je suis un simple poète lyrique, à peine bon à chanter les exploits des mimes, et à imiter leur vol par celui de mes rimes turbulentes et précises! Rentre en toi-même misérable! tu n'as à ton service d'autres ailes que celles des mots, d'autre théâtre que la feuille du papier blanc, les seules taches jaunes et rouges dont tu puisses orner ton visage sont celles des épithètes; et sur ton chapeau indigent, les seuls panaches que tu puisses arborer sont les magnifiques adjectifs.[60]

Baudelaire expresses a similar interest in the clown-acrobat figure in his article on the friend of his youth, in the days of the Ecole Normande, Gustave Le Vavasseur, and, like Banville, stresses the importance of discipline and training for the technique of the artist. The theme of the artist as saltimbanque-gymnaste recurs in his prose work entitled Les Martyrs ridicules (1861). Further echoes of this theme may be found in Edmond de Goncourt's novel Les Frères Zemgano (1879).

The clown-acrobat expresses, moreover, for Banville, the poet's aspiration towards the ideal, his longing to escape from the mediocrity of the world below. In his celebrated poem "Le Saut du tremplin," which concludes the Odes funambulesques (1857), we see the "admirable clown" break contact with the "vile populace," and, in a final élan, break through the "plafond de toile" (this image will be taken up by Mallarmé in his "Pitre châtié") as he soars into the stars. For Banville, the comparison between the clown and the poet was a fundamental one: the clown-acrobat and the poet were akin in that they shared the same techniques, and, more importantly, the same aspirations:

> . . . un être qui, toujours affamé d'infini, s'est, par sa simple volition, affranchi de l'ignoble pesanteur; . . . un tel être, emporté par l'extase, baisé par le rayon des étoiles et toujours vainqueur de la matière, est-il le clown ou le poète?
>
> Ah! les mêmes caractères, les mêmes mots, les mêmes définitions s'appliquent à l'un et à l'autre, car il y a un rythmeur dans tout acrobate, et il y a dans tout habile arrangeur de mots un acrobate, sachant accomplir des merveilles de pondération et d'équilibre. S'élancer avec agilité et avec certitude à travers l'espace, au-dessus du vide, d'un point à un autre, telle est la suprême science du clown, et j'imagine que c'est aussi la seule science du poète.[61]

It is interesting to note, in parenthesis, Gautier's appreciation of Banville's Odes funambulesques:

> Ce lyrique est aussi un bouffon à ses heures. Les Odes funambulesques dansent sur la corde avec ou sans balancier. . . . Les phrases se disloquent comme des clowns, tandis que les rimes font bruire les sonnettes de leurs chapeaux chinois et que le pitre frappe de sa baguette des toiles sauvagement tatouées de couleurs féroces dont il donne une burlesque explication.[62]

The clown image in Banville, symbol of aspiration and achievement, has an overwhelmingly affirmative value, very different from the clown image in Baudelaire which is, predominantly, suggestive of failure and disgrace. The clown figure in Banville is not a tragic one: it does not express the ordeals of creation, the anguish of the struggle against sterility or failure. For, although Banville saw art and the artist as threatened by outside forces, such as the mediocrity and materialism of nineteenth-century society, he did not, apparently, see the poet as seriously threatened by inner conflicts, such as the torments of self-doubt, as did Baudelaire.

Mallarmé was an admirer of Baudelaire and Banville and his interest in the fairground, the _saltimbanque_ and the clown no doubt owes something to their influence. We find elements of the world of the fair in three of Mallarmé's prose poems: _Le Phénomène futur_ (probably composed in 1864, but not published until 1875); _Réminiscences_ (also probably composed in 1864, but not published until 1867); and finally _La Déclaration foraine_ (1867). _Mimique_, a short prose work of 1886, not only illustrates Mallarmé's interest in the _Pierrot_ figure, but, more specifically, reveals his identification of the lowly art of mime with the high seriousness of Art.

His most well known clown poem is the sonnet "Le Pitre châtié" of 1864. Here we see, for the first time, the clown-artist endeavouring to escape from his condition, repudiating the tent and the world of the fairground, symbolic of his art, and attempting to establish contact with another human being. In this rejection of the artist's rôle in favour of human love, we have, as Zaubitzer[63] points out, a reversal of the more traditional movement which has the poet turning, with renewed strength and inspiration, from love to art in a fusion of muse and madonna. The two worlds, however, prove incompatible, leaving the clown with a bitter sense of loss (he is both "châtié" and "châtré") but a more profound understanding of his true nature and the limitations which it entails. We note with interest Mallarmé's description of Baudelaire as a "saltimbanque satan."[64]

Although one does not imagine "pauvre Lélian" to be a thinker, he, like so many artists in the nineteenth century, was concerned with the question of the poet and the nature of his rôle. Verlaine's Fêtes galantes (1869) evoke the popular nineteenth-century conception of the eighteenth century as an age of preciosity, of elegance and galanterie, of sensuality and freedom from certain moral constraints; it is an atmosphere of dream and fantasy, a Watteauesque décor in which gambol the traditional characters of the commedia. The tone of the whole volume is, however, not, as one might have expected, one of irresponsible gaiety: the dream soon darkens into nightmare and disillusionment.

At the same time as Verlaine was writing the Fêtes galantes, he was also working on three more modern clown poems: "Le Clown" (1867); "Le Pitre" (1869) and "Pierrot" (1868)--all of which were later incorporated into Jadis et naguère (1884). In all these poems, we have the now familiar identification of clown and poet. In "Le Clown," we witness the aristocratization of the clown figure, his dignified presence contrasted with his predecessors of low farce, as well as with the stupid "canaille":

> Bobèche, adieu! bonsoir, Paillasse! arrière Gille!
> Place, bouffons vieillis, au parfait plaisantin,
> Place, très grave, très discret et très hautain,
> Voici venir le maître à tous, le clown agile.
> . . . .
> . . . Autour le peuple bête et laid,
> La canaille puante . . .
> Acclame l'histrion sinistre qui la haït.
> (Jadis et naguère)

Here, the traditional rôles of artist and spectator, as typified in Banville's Pauvres Saltimbanques, have been reversed to portray the dominating figure of the clown-artist. We have, also, expressed the primacy of the artist, his confidence in his artistry and, in the tradition of the Banvillian clown-acrobat, an assertion of his grace and precision. Banville's clown of "Le Saut du tremplin" turns his back on the crowd, in order to keep his ideal inviolate from "l'apothéose de l'Epicerie."[65] Verlaine's clown is able to face and even to dominate the crowd in certain respects. His clown is, however, a paradoxical being: while conscious of his moral superiority--a superiority which he cannot freely express--he must, nevertheless, be the "histrion" who delights the "canaille," the "amuseur,"[66] as Victor de Mars so poignantly describes the social position of the Romantic artist, of the rabble.

Verlaine again exploits the picturesque quality of the clown with an evocation of yet another fairground figure in "Le Pitre." In this visual evocation of the clown at work, this time one of the mountebanks of low farce strangely elevated to a position of superiority, Verlaine establishes, once again, that distance which separates the artist from his audience; the remoteness is here symbolized by the elevation of the shaky stage, contrasted with the mud of the fairground. The question of the clown's artistry is once more raised through the problematics of the mask.

Whilst the threat of dissolution to the figures of Italian comedy in the Fêtes galantes remains a virtuality, in the sonnet entitled "Pierrot," it becomes reality. This positively prophetic vision of Pierrot reveals a figure very far removed from his traditional prototype, as evoked in the Fêtes galantes: the creature of sensual appetites and physical agility is now isolated, not only from his former comrades, but also from humanity itself to become the image of a spiritual as well as a physical disintegration. This figure, which had previously embodied the folly of the simple-witted, now takes on a distorted, insane type of witlessness. This spectral, solitary creature with his ridiculous gesticulations into empty space, deprived of any semblance of an audience, comes to symbolize both the artist and humanity at large. The comic clown has become the cosmic clown.

Verlaine returned to the Pierrot figure on two further occasions, but, this time, in light-hearted vein. In both the prose Motif de pantomime: Pierrot gamin (1887) and the verse "Pierrot gamin" (first published in Le Décadent of 1886, and later incorporated into Parallèlement [1889]), Pierrot is the epitome of that innocent perversity, that amorality, that irresponsibility, which Verlaine associated with the child and also with the poet. At the same time, he is the creature of eternal appetite--both physical and spiritual. The Pierrot figure thus bears close resemblance to its traditional prototype. We remember, at this stage, the bipolaric genealogy of Pierrot: an essentially French interpolation into the repertory of the commedia, Pierrot is descended both from the naïve and rustic valets of Italian comedy, as well as from the more refined characters of the pastoral tradition.[67]

It is the spiritual side of Pierrot's nature that will be developed by the writers of the fin de siècle: theirs is, in turn, a complex, metaphysical, ironic Pierrot as we find in Laforgue's Complaintes (1885) and L'Imitation de notre dame la lune (1886), or a violent, macabre Pierrot, as we find in the pantomimes, novels and verse of the 1880's. This sinister Pierrot is prefigured in Henri Rivière's novel entitled Pierrot (1860), where he proposes Pierrot as the spine-chilling incarnation of evil. The macabre Pierrot makes his appearance in the pantomime Pierrot sceptique of Hennique and Huysmans (published in 1881, but never performed), where, for the first time in Pierrot's history, his costume is black. With Paul Margueritte we come upon a criminal version of the macabre Pierrot in Pierrot assassin de sa femme (1881): Pierrot is not only cruel in this pantomime, but instilled with all the neuroses of the fin de siècle. Margueritte's "cerebral" Pierrot finds a cousin in Jean Richepin's sombre, psychological, "modern" Pierrot, as seen in Braves Gens, a novel published in 1886. Georges Lorin, in his somewhat overly sentimental poem entitled "Pierrot," which was written for the Cercle funambulesque, describes thus Pierrot's essential ennui, which was to become the hallmark of the late nineteenth century Pierrot:

> C'est la fleur de la mélancolie
> . . . .
> Pierrot, c'est notre ennui qui chante!
> . . . .
> C'est . . .
> Le Zut à la réalité
> Que l'on n'a jamais garrotté.
> . . . .
> Papillon de la fantaisie
> Greffé sur le mal d'exister![68]

In this brief clown-digest of nineteenth-century French literature, I have attempted to illustrate how sustained and diverse was the interest in a multitude of clown types. In this period, the clown took on a new prominence in French literature, and, what is more, a new intensity of meaning. One of the most significant developments was the use of the clown figure to express ideas and attitudes far removed from those traditionally associated with it. To quote Rubin:

> There is a clearly discernible tendency for the clown figure, when it is taken over by serious writers, to lose its comic character or else for the comic character to be deformed, with the comedy being no longer the frank gaiety which used to be associated with the clown, but a painful, even cruel humour, which expresses not lightness of heart but chagrin and disillusionment.[69]

This new understanding of the clown as, predominantly, a figure of anguish and despair gradually became associated with the idea of the poet; through this ironic juxtaposition, the artist proposed not only a caricature of his art, but also a travesty of his social condition in his eternal plaint against his spiritual and social alienation. This "épiphanie dérisoire de l'art et de l'artiste"[70] constitutes the "modern" "myth" of the clown, that is to say the essential "embouffonnement du poète."[71]

NOTES

[1] H. Michaux, L'Espace du dedans (Paris: Gallimard, 1944), p. 256.

[2] E. Welsford, The Fool: His Social and Literary History (Gloucester, Mass.: Smith, 1966), p. 277.

[3] Whilst both Rameau and Fantasio are indeed social parasites, the former seems more concerned with man's social position ("Vous dansez, vous avez dansé et vous continuerez de danser la vile pantomime." Le Neveu de Rameau [Paris: Flammarion, 1967], p. 184), whereas the latter, a true "enfant du siècle," seems more metaphysically inclined: his analysis of social interactions emphasizes, rather, man's eternal sequestration ("Hélas! tout ce que les hommes se disent entre eux se ressemble; les idées qu'ils échangent sont presque toujours les mêmes dans toutes leurs conversations; mais, dans l'intérieur de toutes ces machines isolées, quels replis, quels compartiments secrets! C'est tout un monde que chacun porte en lui! un monde ignoré qui naît et qui meurt en silence! Quelles solitudes que tous ces corps humains!" Fantasio [Paris: Bordas, 1969], p. 47). It must be admitted, however, that in both cases a bouffonnerie de forme encompasses a content of high seriousness.

[4] R.L. Füglister, "Baudelaire et le thème des bohémiens," Etudes Baudelairiennes, 2 (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1971), p. 100.

[5] J. Genet, "Le Funambule," in Les Bonnes et L'Atelier de Giacometti (Décines, Isère: L'Arbalète, 1958), pp. 173-204.

[6] L. Johnson, An Anthology of New Zealand Verse (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 223.

[7] See E. Welsford, op. cit., "The Fool as Mascot and Scapegoat," pp. 55-77.

[8] See (i) L. Chancerel, "Permanence et réveil de la commedia dell'arte," Rivista di Studi Teatrali, 9-10 (1954), 189-199; (ii) G. Lerminier, "La Commedia dell'arte en notre temps," ibid., pp. 200-203.

[9] J. Starobinski, "Portrait de l'artiste en saltimbanque," Les Cahiers du Chemin, 8 (1970), 108-110.

[10] See J. Auger-Duvignaud, *L'Acteur: Esquisse d'une sociologie du comédien* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), pp. 108-110.

[11] J. Starobinski, op. cit., p. 109.

[12] G. Book-Senninger, "L'Année 1847--de la farce à la pantomime," in *Théophile Gautier, auteur dramatique* (Paris: Nizet, 1972), p. 275.

[13] T. Gautier, *Le Moniteur Universel*, 5 September 1864, quoted by C. Book-Senninger, op. cit., p. 276.

[14] G. de Nerval, "La Comédie des singes," *L'Artiste*, 23 January 1846, p. 89.

[15] R. de Villarceaux, "La Comédie italienne et Deburau," *Revue Nouvelle*, 1 July 1846, pp. 474-494.

[16] It is interesting to note the fluctuations in the genre of the vaudeville: whilst popular in origin, it became more intellectually oriented and literary at the beginning of the nineteenth century, though still continuing, in certain respects, the *poissard* and *grivois* manner of its origins (see M. Carlson, *The French Stage in the Nineteenth Century* [New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1972]).

[17] T. Gautier, quoted by M. Sand, *Masques et bouffons: Comédie italienne* (Paris: Lévy, 1862), p. 284.

[18] J. Janin, *Deburau: Histoire du théâtre à quatre sous* (Paris: Librarie des Bibliophiles, 1861), p. 75.

[19] J. Janin, ibid., p. 157.

[20] A. Vitu, "Pierrot valet de la mort," *L'Echo*, 27 September 1846, p. 1.

[21] Champfleury, *Souvenirs des Funambules* (Paris: Lévy, 1859), p. 256.

[22] *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Y.-G. Le Dantec (Paris: Gallimard, 1961). All further references will be made from this edition.

[23] I presume that Baudelaire's reference to a "modern" Pierrot suggests these qualities, although I can be no means be certain. It should be noted, in fact, that Deburau's Pierrot remains a shadowy figure at best. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to reconcile the often divergent contemporary accounts of the characteristics of his Pierrot.

[24] Correspondance, ed. C. Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1973). Letter to Poulet-Malassis (1860), Corr., II, 90. All further references to Baudelaire's correspondence will be made from this edition.

[25] Letter to Poulet-Malassis (1857), Corr., I, 390.

[26] J. Janin, quoted by M. Sand, op. cit., p. 285.

[27] J. Janin, Deburau: Histoire du théâtre à quatre sous (Paris: Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1881), p. 8.

[28] T. Gautier, "Shakespeare aux Funambules," Revue de Paris, September 1842, p. 65.

[29] T. Gautier, Histoire de l'art dramatique en France depuis vingt-cinq ans, quoted by M. Sand, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

[30] T. de Banville, Mes Souvenirs (Paris: Charpentier, 1882), p. 240.

[31] E. Lataye, "Les Masques et bouffons de la comédie italienne," Revue des Deux Mondes, 24 (1859), 752.

[32] It is interesting to note that Shakespeare, in the nineteenth century, was interpreted in two diametrically opposed contexts: firstly, he was equated with the world of fantasy, and secondly, he was equated with the Hamlet myth, seen as the embodiment of Romantic malaise. In this context, see (i) R. Lamont, "The Hamlet Myth," Yale French Studies, 33 (1964-1965), 80-91; (ii) H. Bailey, "The Hamlet of Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Laforgue," in Hamlet in France from Voltaire to Laforgue (Geneva: Droz, 1964), pp. 137-152.

[33] F. Mercey, "Le Theâtre en Italie III: Les Théâtres napolitains--Scaramouche et Pulcinella," Revue des Deux Mondes, 22 (1840), 856.

[34] R. de Villarceaux, op. cit., p. 496.

[35] M. du Camp, Souvenirs littéraires (Paris: Hachette, 1906), I, 50-51.

[36] A. Houssaye, preface to J. Janin, op. cit., p. xxi.

[37] See J. Rousset, "L'Acteur glorifié," in L'Intérieur et l'extérieur (Paris: Corti, 1968), pp. 151-164, for a discussion of the problematics of the life-theatre dialectic.

[38] M. Cutler, Evocations of the Eighteenth Century in French Poetry: 1800-1869 (Geneva: Droz, 1970).

[39] A. Houssaye, "De la peinture galante en France: Watteau et Lancret," quoted by M. Cutler, op. cit., p. 193.

[40] T. Gautier, Histoire de l'art dramatique en France depuis vingt-cinq ans, quoted by M. Cutler, op. cit., p. 194.

[41] P. Hédouin, L'Artiste, 16 November 1845, quoted by M. Cutler, op. cit., p. 194.

[42] E. and J. de Goncourt, L'Art du dix-huitième siècle, quoted by M. Cutler, op. cit., p. 222.

[43] For a detailed study of Watteau's influence on the nineteenth century theatre, see E. Souffrin-Le Breton, "Banville et la poétique du décor," in French Nineteenth Century Painting and Literature, ed. U. Finke (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 72 et seq.

[44] For a detailed study of the clown theme in the painting of the nineteenth century, see (i) F. Haskell, "The Sad Clown: Some Notes on a Nineteenth-Century Myth," in French Nineteenth-Century Painting and Literature, ed. U. Finke (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 2-16; (ii) J. Starobinski's beautifully illustrated text, Portrait de l'artiste en saltimbanque (Geneva: Skira, 1970).

[45] Champfleury, op. cit., p. 61.

[46] J. Starobinski, "Portrait de l'artiste en saltimbanque," Critique (Paris), 271 (1969), 1034.

[47] T. de Banville, "Les Petits Théâtres de Paris: Le Boulevard du Temple," Musée des Familles, 13 (1845-1846), 203.

[48] V. Hugo, Théâtre complet (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), p. 422.

[49] See J. Starobinski, op. cit., where is explained the essential ambivalence of the clown symbol itself, containing both mercurial and calibanesque qualities: the history of the clown shows this figure as both saviour and demoniacal transgressor (cf. the Hellekin legend).

[50] M. Leiris, "Picasso et la comédie humaine ou les avatars de Gros Pied," in Brisées (Paris: Mercure de France, 1966), pp. 191-192.

[51] Champfleury, op. cit., p. 218.

[52] See M. Albert, Les Théâtres des Boulevards (1789-1848) (Paris: Société Française d'Imprimerie et de Librairie, 1902).

[53] Letter to A. de Vigny (21 April 1821), quoted by A. Ubersfeld, Le Roi et le bouffon: Etude sur le théâtre de Hugo de 1830 à 1829 (Paris: Corti, 1974), p. 95.

[54] See A. Ubersfeld, ibid., pp. 96-98, where the "lineage" of Triboulet and Quasimodo is traced back to its biographical source in the grotesque figure of Corcova, as well as in Hugo's early interest in the parades of the puppet theatre in the Luxembourg gardens.

[55] A. de Musset, Oeuvres complètes (New York: Macmillan, 1963), Act I, sc. ii.

[56] J. Starobinski, "Note sur le bouffon romantique," Cahiers du Sud, 61 (1966), 275.

[57] R. Bray, "Banville le funambule," in Préciosité et les précieux de Thibaudet de Champagne à Jean Giraudoux (Paris: Nizet, 1960), pp. 263-274.

[58] See (i) E. Souffrin-Le Breton, op. cit.; (ii) M. Cutler, "Commedia dell'arte," in Evocations of the Eighteenth Century in French Poetry: 1800-1869, op. cit., pp. 198-213.

[59] T. de Banville, Les Pauvres Saltimbanques (Paris: Lévy, 1853), p. 13.

[60] T. de Banville, "Les Hanlon-Lees," in Paris vécu (Paris: Charpentier, 1883), pp. 453-461.

[61] T. de Banville, "Le Clown et le poète," in Critiques (Paris: Charpentier, 1917), pp. 421-422.

[62] T. Gautier, Les Progrès de la poésie française depuis 1830, quoted by R.L. Füglister, "Der Gaukler und Akrobat als alter Ego des Künstlers: Das Saltimbanque-Motiv bei Baudelaire, Banville und Daumier," Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 15 October 1967, p. 4.

[63] H. Zaubitzer, "Clownmetaphern bei Baudelaire, Mallarmé und Michaux," Die Neuren Sprachen, 15 (1966), 450.

[64] S. Mallarmé, "Symphonie littéraire," Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 263.

[65] T. de Banville, L'Ame de Paris, quoted by M. Cutler, op. cit., p. 209.

[66] V. de Mars, "Le Théâtre et les livres," Revue des Deux Mondes, 19 (1847), 198.

[67] See (i) G. Doutrepont, L'Evolution du type de Pierrot dans la littérature française (Brussels: Publications de l'Académie Royale de Langue et de Littérature Française, 1925); (ii) K. Dick, Pierrot (London: Hutchinson, 1960).

[68] G. Lorin, quoted by P. Hugounet, Mimes et Pierrots: Notes et documents pour servir à l'histoire de la pantomime (Paris: Fischbacher, 1889).

[69] V.L. Rubin, "Clowns in Nineteenth-Century French Literature: Buffoons, Pierrots and Saltimbanques," Diss. University of California, Berkeley 1970.

[70] J. Starobinski, "Portrait de l'artiste en saltimbanque," Critique (Paris), 279 (1969), 1035.

[71] J. Starobinski, "Note sur le bouffon romantique," Cahiers du Sud, 61 (1966), 275.

Combien prête-t-on sur une lyre
au Mont-de-Piété?
L'Ecole païenne (P., 626)

CHAPTER II

THE ARTIST-FUNAMBULE ON THE STAGE OF LIFE

In a democratic, positivistic age, the figure of the buffoon is essentially one of obsolescence. The buffoon, as Welsford points out, finds his place in a sacramental universe: he has no place in an age of science:

> The King, the Priest and the Fool all belong essentially to a society shaped by the belief in Divine Order, human inadequacy, efficacious ritual; and there is no real place for any of them in a world increasingly dominated by the notions of the puritan, the scientist, and the captain of industry; for strange as it may seem the fool in cap and bells can only flourish among people who have sacraments, who value symbols as well as tools, and cannot forever survive the decay of faith in divinely imposed authority, the rejection of all taboo and mysterious inspiration.[1]

It is the aim of this chapter to illustrate why the artist *déclassé* of the nineteenth century found natural affinities with the figure of the buffoon, which came to symbolize the rootless nature of the former, or, more specifically, his functionless function in a utilitarian society. Through its historical obsolescence, the figure of the buffoon symbolized a sense of loss, of no longer "belonging" to a pre-established social order: the nineteenth-century artist, living in a post-maecenic era, found himself to be in a similar position. His sense of social vagrancy found expression in the popular equation of the nineteenth-century artist with the itinerant fairground artist, such as the *saltimbanque*, *jocrisse*, queue-rouge or clown. Baudelaire's "Vieux Saltimbanque," "A une jeune saltimbanque," the itinerant fairground artists of the prose poem "Les Vocations," or the "bohémiens" and the "zingaris" in his notes for a play entitled La Fin de Don Juan, which, incidentally, was never written--these are but part of the vast family of bohemian artists in nineteenth-century art and literature which appear in such works as Daumier's series of saltimbanque drawings, Mérimée's Carmen, Gautier's Tra los montes or Hugo's Notre-Dame de Paris.[2] Like the buffoon, the figure of the bohemian represented, apart from social pariahdom, the sense of decadence, the mourning for an arcadian happiness that is no more. "Les poètes," notes Füglister, "se sentent attirés vers les bohémiens, les considèrent comme les ultimes représentants de l'âge d'or égarés en des siècles prosaïques."[3] While this view is presented by Baudelaire in poems such as "Bohémiens en voyage," the former quality of social pariahdom, coupled with physical and material discomfort, will be seen to be more typical of Baudelaire's presentation of the fairground artist as a figure of failure and disgrace, both on the economic and the aesthetic planes.

It will be noted that whilst, in the nineteenth century, the term bouffon signified the court fool in his historical context, the term also connoted, in derogatory fashion, a somewhat vulgar popular entertainer. The Bescherelle dictionary of 1847 offers the following definition of the word:

> Farceur, jongleur, tout homme qui fait métier d'amuser la populace par des plaisanteries basses et grossières.[4]

The court buffoon, redolent of a certain fixity, would seem to be the counterpole of the peripatetic amuseur; in both symbols, however, is contained the notion of pariahdom and social degradation. Indeed, the Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française of 1835 brings out more clearly the notion of social degradation inherent in the term bouffon:

> Bouffon: Personnage de théâtre dont l'emploi est de faire rire. On le dit, par extension et presque toujours par dénigrement, d'un homme qui prend à tâche de faire rire, par ses plaisanteries, les personnes dans la société desquelles il se trouve.
> Servir de bouffon: être dans quelque société un objet de moquerie, de risée.[5]

If the nineteenth-century artist saw his ironic self-portrait in the figure of the buffoon, the "amuseur du peuple,"[6] as Victor de Mars describes him, this was largely due to the precarious and often paradoxical nature of his social position; he is, in essence, a type of social funambule, walking the tight-rope between aristocratic ideology and bourgeois origin and pragmatism. In his study on Baudelaire, Sartre[7] elucidates the funambulesque nature of the post-revolutionary French writer whose case is that of a class ideology surviving a specific class structure. Though the pre-revolutionary writer had been psychologically aristocratized by prolonged service to the elite, he was, nevertheless, a bourgeois by origin, and it would have been logical for him to return to his own class for approval and status when this class became the dominant force in French society. This did not happen, says Sartre, for two reasons: firstly, writers carried into the new era an old definition of their craft as a pure art, free of any obligations to the daily world; secondly, having rejected the spirit of social pragmatism embodied by the bourgeoisie, along with the spiritual bankruptcy of that class, it thus became impossible to seek recognition from the erstwhile profanum vulgus:

> Au dix-huitième siècle, l'existence d'une aristocratie de naissance simplifie tout: l'écrivain professionnel, quelle que soit son origine . . . a des relations directes avec elle, par-dessus la bourgeoisie. Pensionné par la noblesse ou rossé sur son ordre, il est sous sa dépendance immédiate et tire d'elle ses revenus aussi bien que sa dignité sociale; il est "aristocratisé"; elle lui communique un peu de son "mana." . . . Lorsque la classe noble s'effondre, l'écrivain est étourdi par la chute de ses protecteurs; il lui faut chercher des justifications nouvelles. Le commerce qu'il entretenait avec la caste sacrée des prêtres et des nobles le déclassait réellement, c'est-à-dire qu'il était arraché à la classe bourgeoise dont il émanait, lavé de ses origines, nourri par l'aristocratie sans pouvoir cependant entrer dans son sein. Dépendant pour son travail et sa vie matérielle d'une société supérieure et inaccessible qui, oisive elle-même et parasitaire, rémunérait son labeur par des dons capricieux . . . , plongé cependant par sa famille, ses amitiés et les modalités de sa vie quotidienne dans le sein d'une bourgeoisie qui avait perdu le pouvoir de le justifier, il avait pris conscience d'être à part, en l'air et sans racines, un Ganymède emporté par les serres de l'aigle; il se sentait perpétuellement supérieur à son milieu. Mais après la Révolution, la classe bourgeoise prend elle-même le pouvoir. C'est elle, en bonne logique, qui devrait conférer à l'écrivain sa dignité nouvelle. Seulement cette opération ne serait possible que si celui-ci acceptait de rentrer dans le sein de la bourgeoisie. Or il ne saurait en être question: d'abord deux cents ans de faveur royale lui ont appris à la mépriser; mais surtout, parasite d'une classe parasite, il s'est habitué à se considérer comme un clerc, cultivant la pensée pure et l'art pur.[8]

In the unfinished sketch entitled La Fin de Don Juan, Baudelaire portrays, in the opposition of the two main characters, Don Juan and Leporello, the dilemma confronting the nineteenth-century artist, that is to say the fundamental incompatibility between the aristocratic spirit and the materialistic efficacy of the bourgeoisie, and, moreover, the defeat of the former at the hands of the latter. Baudelaire's description of Leporello is as follows: "personnage froid, raisonnable, et vulgaire, ne parlant sans cesse que de vertu et d'économie; il associe volontiers les deux idées; il a une espèce d'intelligence à la Franklin. C'est un coquin comme Franklin. C'est la future bourgeoisie qui va bientôt remplacer la noblesse tombante" (P., 563).

The social emancipation of the nineteenth-century artist naturally led to a conflict between ideology and economic interest. Whilst the artist was, on the one hand, transformed into a free social agent, no longer subservient to the tasks and whims of a "sponsor" class,[9] he was, on the other, obliged to confront a new, no longer personalized audience. Thus, whilst one aspect of the new literary order made intellectual autonomy an ideal, the other made impersonal economic dependence inevitable. Literature had become subject to the modern market place. It is important to realize, however, that the Romantic antithesis between the sacred nature of art and the desecration of the market place is somewhat misleading, because the dignity the artist defends against the market also owes its position of elevated autonomy to the self-same market system. It is his subjection to the laws of the market place, his degraded status as another wage-labourer, who is obliged to sell his very sensibility, that the nineteenth-century writer experiences, in a very unholy sense, as his prostitution. It is precisely this dilemma which is reflected in Chatterton; its theme is the martyrdom of genius at the hands of a mercantile society, "l'homme spiritualiste," as Vigny defines him in his preface to the drama, "étouffé par une société matérialiste."[10]

Economic dependence coupled with intellectual autonomy cannot but produce a situation fraught with duplicity: the prostituted artist is forced into a position whereby he must deny his real self, and, like the tragic _saltimbanque_ of "La Muse vénale," adopt a rôle.[11] _Chatterton_ describes thus the miserable _histrionisme_ of the artist:

> . . . toute cette comédie est jouée: j'en commence une autre avec moi-même. --Il faut, à cette heure, que ma volonté soit assez puissante pour saisir mon âme, et l'emporter tour à tour dans le cadavre ressuscité des personnages que j'évoque, et dans le fantôme de ceux que j'invente! Ou bien il faut que, devant Chatterton malade, devant Chatterton qui a froid, qui a faim, ma volonté fasse poser avec prétention un autre Chatterton, gracieusement paré pour l'amusement du public, et que celui-là soit décrit par l'autre; le troubadour par le mendiant. Voilà les deux poésies possibles, ça ne va pas plus loin que cela! Les divertir, ou leur faire pitié; faire jouer de misérables poupées, ou l'être soi-même et faire traffic de cette singerie! Ouvrir son coeur pour le mettre en étalage sur un comptoir! S'il a des blessures, tant mieux! il a plus de prix; tant soit peu mutilé, on l'achète plus cher![12]

The fundamental correlation between prostitution and _histrionisme_ could not be stated more clearly. Whilst both these axes are evidenced in Baudelaire's works, the focus of this chapter will be on the former.

Art has become a commodity to be sold in the market place. Baudelaire, from his early period on, viewed the literary market with no illusions. In 1846, he wrote in his _Conseils aux jeunes littérateurs_:

> Quelque belle que soit une maison, elle est avant tout--avant que sa beauté soit démontrée, --tant de mètres de haut sur tant de large. --De même la littérature, qui est la matière la plus inappréciable, --est avant tout un remplissage de colonnes; et l'architecte littéraire, dont le nom seul n'est pas une chance de bénéfice, doit vendre à tous prix. (P., 479)

Similarly, in L'Ecole païenne of 1852, Baudelaire expresses, quite explicitly, his views on the profanation of art in a mercantile society:

> Buvez-vous des bouillons d'ambrosie? Mangez-vous des côtelettes de Paros? Combien prête-t-on sur une lyre au Mont-de-Piété? (P., 426)

Never had Baudelaire spoken in such materialistic terms of his art--an opinion so radically opposed to his later views on the sacrosanct autonomy of art, which we find expressed in his articles on Poe.

The economic dependency of the artist and the inevitable merchandizing of literature is, in fact, a common theme in nineteenth-century French literature. Philadelphe-Maurice Alhoy, a popular author of Baudelaire's day, describes thus, in his picaresque novel entitled Les Mémoires de Bilboquet, recueillis par un bourgeois de Paris and published in 1854, the "fabrication" of literature as a market commodity:

> Il ne reste plus au metteur en oeuvre que des combinaisons, rien que des combinaisons. On est littérateur comme on est ouvrier. . . . Tout fabricant littéraire un peu au courant de son métier tient boutique de combinaisons comme le pharmacien du coin tient assortiment de drogues. Chez les deux industriels, c'est toujours une question d'amalgame, et ils débitent leurs pillules respectives à un prix modéré aux clients qui veulent bien les honorer de leur confiance.[13]

In an article of 1846 entitled "Des ouvriers de l'esprit: De ceux qui ne dînent pas," Eugène Briffault sums up the position of the nineteenth-century Parisian artist thus:

> Les lettres, les arts, tout ce qui se voue au culte de l'idée et de l'imagination, fournissent à la population famélique de Paris un contingent énorme.[14]

The situation of the artist is summarized in more humorous fashion in the satirical verses accompanying Gavarni's caricatures:

> Plus de soupers gratis aux timides échos:
> La Pétrarque du coin vend ses sonnets tout chauds.[15]

or

> Une odeur de cuisine aux myrtes est mêlée,
> Et suit jusqu'en ses vers la muse échevelée.
> Combien, dans ces ébats tendres et pudibonds,
> Le civet a de pleurs et l'amour d'oignons.
> De regrets bien amers illusion suivie!
> Où cacher ta couronne, auguste poésie,
> Quand la Réalité marchandera demain
> Le portrait au galant et la peau de lapin?[16]

Concomitant with the notion of literature as a saleable commodity is that of the alienation of the writer socially emancipated by a revolutionary age, but, nevertheless, dependent on a now impersonal audience. During the Old Régime, the writer, while a specialized retainer of the aristocracy, had reflected a specific milieu and had been sanctioned by that milieu, thus perpetuating the status quo. For the socially emancipated writer, however, there was a total absence of obligation to the standards of a specific social milieu: lacking a common heritage, the new bourgeois audience offered no distinct invitation or sounding board to the creative powers of the writer, who was thus free to experiment with new artistic manners and subjects. But the world whose very facelessness made this possible, subjugated this originality to the laws of economics: faced with the problem of gaining public approval from a disembodied and often hostile audience, the modern writer no longer played his part on a stage of cultural continuity. It is precisely this sense of appreciation and "belonging" which Baudelaire laments in his Salon de 1859, where the Old Régime, epitomized by the Renaissance period, is brought into sharp contrast with his own times:

> Les nobles artistes de la Renaissance eussent été bien coupables de n'être pas grands, féconds et sublimes, encouragés et excités qu'ils étaient par une compagnie illustre de seigneurs et de prélats, que dis-je? par la multitude elle-même qui était artiste en ces âges d'or! Mais l'artiste moderne qui s'est élevé très-haut _malgré_ son siècle, qu'en dirons-nous, si ce n'est de certaines choses que ce siècle n'acceptera pas, et qu'il faut laisser dire aux âges futurs. (P., 1050-1051)

By an antithesis typical of Romanticism, the public desecration of both art and artist must be understood in the light of the auto-sacralization of the artist in the Romantic period: the social degredation of the artist receives its full significance as the paradoxical counterpole of the Romantic artist's megalomaniac aspirations. For the Romantics, the artist was no mere flute-player; he was the highest human type, the leader of men, the _vates_, whose function--indeed, whose mission--it was to direct the march of human progress in which the early nineteenth century, following the _philosophes_ of the Enlightenment, believed so firmly. Romanticism, as Shroder[17] points out, rediscovered the myth of Orpheus, in which were combined the poet's mission as religious leader, celebrant of the mysteries, and social leader, creator of laws and political institutions. The legend of Orpheus and the very real example of Chateaubriand, and, after his retirement, of Lamartine, served to strengthen the Romantics' pretensions to a position of power in society. In Hugo, especially, we find the messianic pretensions of the _poète-mage_. The political mysticisms which flourished during the early Romantic period further confirmed the already exalted ego-image of the artist.

The Saint-Simonians, for example, published numerous "calls to the artist," inviting them to spread the gospel of the socialist religion, to take up once again the sceptre they had held in earlier eras of social and religious harmony. The Poet was thus invested with the highest humanitarian rôle: religion, as Bénichou[18] explains, has been displaced by literature. The neo-classical concept of literature as divertissement has been superseded by that of literature guided by edificatory and humanitarian principles. The artist has insinuated himself into the rôle of the priest, thus establishing what Bénichou terms "la nouvelle cléricature laïque."[19]

In the Romantic attempt to replace certain social groups which were defunct or losing status, the artist was made to assume the functions of and demanded the rewards reserved for earlier ideal types, such as the warrior-aristocrat, the leader of men and the preserver of the ideal. Having assumed the function of the priest, the Romantic artist also had pretensions to that of the warrior-hero, to whom he had been subservient in earlier times, glorifying and immortalizing the former in his song. Refusing to stand in the shadow of the warrior-hero, the Romantics subordinated the heroic experience to Art, the creative experience: or rather, the creative experience was made into a new type of heroism. The heroes of the flesh, as of Homeric times, were replaced by the heroes of the spirit and of the mind, as we find in Balzac's notion of the artist as demiurge, for whom poetry was not simply the art of literature, but the creation, or rather re-creation, of the world. The creation and destruction of the martial experience has been transposed to an aesthetic universe. It is in the light of these ideal types, that we must understand the Baudelairian triad of the poet, the priest and the warrior: "Il n'y a de grand parmi les hommes que le poëte, le prêtre et le soldat" (Journaux intimes, P., 1287). He compares the poet with the priest and the warrior also, and more importantly, on account of the fact that they all are exempted from the daily routine of the workaday world, thereby occupying a privileged, extra-territorial status in relation to it.

However, the Romantic image of the artist proved ultimately an unrealizable megalomaniac ideal: the omnipotent mage, the leader of society, was transformed by that society into an impotent martyr. The grandiose humanitarian dream of the poète-citoyen had exploded: the desired communion with humanity had ended in degrading pariahdom. "Le poète n'est rien," writes Bénichou, "au moment même où il est tenté de se croire tout."[20] The failure of the artist's humanitarian rôle was, however, transmuted, through the establishment of a kind of aesthetic freemasonry, into one of grandeur: ignored by the public, the artist chose, in his turn, to disregard the public and adopt an attitude of civic insouciance, of deliberate irresponsibility. The religious communion of artist and society had become the solitary communion of artist and Art. The ritual-social function of the first generation Romantics had been replaced by the aesthetic-individual function of the Art for Art's sakers. This progression applies, indeed, not only to the Romantic period, but, as Huizinga explains, to the history of art in general, where we find a similar development from a social to an asocial function:

> L'évolution de culture, qui a progressivement détaché l'art de son fondement tant que fonction vitale de la vie sociale, et en a fait une activité toujours plus libre et plus autonome de l'individu, se poursuit depuis des siècles. . . . L'art devient plus intime, mais aussi plus isolé, l'affaire d'un seul homme.[21]

Although quoting Wagner, Baudelaire expounds at length on the subject of the ritual function of the poet: the theatre of ancient Athens offered an example of that arcadian period when poet and public joined ritually in communion, when the Orphic mission of the poet was reality:

> . . . Là, le théâtre n'ouvrait son enceinte qu'à de certaines solennités où s'accomplissait une fête religieuse qu'accompagnaient les jouissances de l'art. Les hommes les plus distingués de l'Etat prenaient à ces solennités une part directe comme poètes ou directeurs; ils paraissaient comme les prêtres aux yeux de la population assemblée de la cité et du pays, et cette population était remplie d'une si haute attente de la sublimité des oeuvres qui allaient être représentées devant elle, que les poëmes les plus profonds, ceux d'un Eschyle et d'un Sophocle, pouvaient être proposés au peuple et assurés d'être parfaitement entendus. (Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris, P., 1219)

The essential irony underlying this eulogy is best brought out if this passage is read in conjunction with the famous lament in Fusées where the exiled prophet criticizes the "americanization" of life (P., 1262-1265).

The Romantic artist's retreat from society must be viewed as a bitter attempt to salvage his dignity by an individual ostracized by society: the sacred function of art would no longer be concerned with humanitarian values: the pride of the artist would, henceforth, be derived from the esoteric nature of his art. His function ignored by society, the second generation Romantic chose a functionless function:

> La poésie est parole publique, et le public ne l'écoute pas. Mieux, les poètes ont prétendu faire d'elle la Parole, le Message suprême et le Guide du genre humain; et à cette promotion il n'est pas question de renoncer. De là la profondeur du drame: la poésie ne serait pas solitude si elle ne rêvait d'être enseignement et communion vaste. Cette ambition prend nécessairement dans l'échec un nouveau langage. Gautier se situe à la naissance d'une longue ascèse poétique, qui va s'efforcer de transmuer en surcroît de grandeur un cuisant sentiment d'impuissance. . . . Il est à l'origine de ce qu'on pourrait appeler . . . le sacerdoce du Dépit . . . : âcre désappointement de l'Esprit, qui voit sans crédit réel les valeurs qu'il prétend porter en lui, et se feint supérieur à la colère qu'il en éprouve.[22]

After the humanitarian dream of the poète-citoyen had exploded, the artist was reduced to a jongleur, a mere juggler of words devoid of social implication. In the words of Gautier, in his preface to Les Jeunes-France, art is but "une jonglerie pure."[23] The heroic self-image of the artist-jongleur but serves to measure, ironically, the depths of his own degradation. The ambivalent social situation of the artist-funambule, reflected in the antithesis figured in the mythologization of the mage-pariah, refers to the artist's fundamental loss of dignity: it is the transmutation of the legend of Orpheus into that of Icarus. In a utilitarian society which has no place or function for the artist, the man of letters can have no claim to dignity. This was, as Benjamin explains, precisely Baudelaire's case:

> Baudelaire war genötigt, die Würde des Dichters in einer Gesellschaft zu beanspruchen, die keinerlei Würde mehr zu vergeben hatte. Daher die Bouffonnerie seines Auftretens.[24]

* * *

The artist as figure of prostitution, whose literary integrity is called into question by his very existence in a mercantile society, is most subtly realized in the figure of the saltimbanque, the modern-day bouffon.[25] In "La Muse vénale," an early poem of Les Fleurs du mal which appeared in all three editions, the prostitution of the artist is presented by way of chronic antithesis, the Muse adopting both the classical rôle of Greek statue, after the Parnassian fashion, and the modern rôle of the saltimbanque, the lowly public entertainer. In the paradoxical synthesis of these rôles, which is echoed in the synthesis of classical and prosaic styles, is expressed the demotion of the artist and his ironic nostalgia for a classical age when he had been accorded a certain esteem. This fairground Muse, as the title of the poem suggests, has been obliged to forsake her palatial dwelling for the fairground tent, where the only "palais" at her disposal is her own song, which, however, is no longer hers, but a commodity to be sold in the market place where she must display her wares ("étaler tes appas," P., 15).[26]

In the first quatrain, we are presented with the material destitution, the cold and poverty, of the Muse in her palatial dwelling. The palace of Art has been invaded by the material requirements of the artist: the poet cannot reside in the palace of Art without sustenance. He is obliged, therefore, to transform his art into a commercial enterprise. This Baudelaire confesses quite openly in his article on Pierre Dupont:

> Le poëte doit vivre pour lui-même; il doit, comme disait Honoré de Balzac, offrir une surface commerciale. Il faut que son outil le nourrisse. (P., 609)

The conflict between aesthetic ideology and economic dependence is reflected in the gradual shift of tone, which passes from elevated invocation ("O muse de mon coeur, amante des palais," P., 14) to mundane trivia ("Auras-tu . . . un tison pour chauffer tes deux pieds violets?," ibid.).

The second quatrain continues the opposition between material destitution and aesthetic credo: will the Muse be able to derive warmth and sustenance from the "nocturnes rayons," that is to say the inner recesses of her being and hence poetic inspiration? The last two lines of the second quatrain are extraordinarily dense: here, the richness of suggestion lies in the ambiguity of the words "palais" and "or." Whilst both appear to be suggestive of material wealth, they are redolent also of a spiritual universe. The word "palais" refers back to the "palais" of the first line, which itself is ambiguous inasmuch as it refers to both the palace of Art as well as a princely dwelling; its use in the second quatrain is typical of the whole poem in its synthesis of the elevated and the mundane. Here, "palais" refers also to the palate of the mouth: the source of inspiration for the Muse has dried up, she can no longer sing, that is to say the artist, unable to maintain his aesthetic integrity, cannot create a work of art. Incapable of creating, he cannot earn a living ("Sentant ta bourse à sec autant que ton palais," P., 15). The ambiguity of the word "or" in the last line of the second quatrain is further emphasized by the ambivalence in the word "voûtes" of the same line, both referring to the mercantile world as well as the poetic universe. The last two lines are thus taken to mean the following: if the Muse is without economic support, and cannot sing, if the artist is destitute, how can he reap the poetic "gold," how can he create poetry?

Being in a position of economic dependence, the poet must prostitute both his art and his sentiments. The final tercets express both the prostitution of the poet's talents to the venal muse by playing the money game, and, more importantly, the squandering of the poet's very substance--a theme expressed more explicitly by Baudelaire in the poem contained in the "Tableaux parisiens," "Le Jeu," where the artist is again set against a scene of prostitution (both external and internal):

> Sous de sales plafonds un rang de pâles lustres
> Et d'énormes quinquets projetant leurs lueurs
> Sur des fronts ténébreux de poètes illustres
> Qui viennent gaspiller leurs sanglantes sueurs.
> (P., 91)

The poets literally spend their vital fluid, their "sanglantes sueurs," by abdicating their poetic responsibility: what is elementary to the artist must become, for him, alimentary.

In the first tercet of "La Muse vénale," the Muse is compared to a choir boy, singing hymns to a god in whom he does not believe. We have, here, a symbolic representation of the artist-as-money-making-author (to borrow Baudelaire's description of Poe), who must sacrifice the substance of his work in order to substantiate his position in society. In Baudelaire's early poem "Je n'ai pas pour maîtresse," the following lines describe, in no uncertain terms, the prostitution of the artist:

> Pour avoir des souliers elle a vendu son âme;
> Mais le bon Dieu rirait si, près de cette infâme,
> Je tranchais du Tartufe [sic] et singeais la hauteur,
> Moi qui vends ma pensée et qui veux être auteur.
> (P., 196)

The image of the choir boy playing with the censer is again ambiguous: the child is deliberately profaning something which is sacred, in the manner of the economically dependent artist. Yet, one wonders, does Baudelaire attempt to conjure up an image of child-like innocence in order to excuse the apparent profanation? Like the choir boy with the censer, the artist must also pour incense on an indifferent public.

The final tercet, like its predecessor, is a response to the question posed in the initial quatrains: what solution is open to the artist in the face of destitution?

> Ou, saltimbanque à jeun, étaler tes appas
> Et ton rire trempé de pleurs qu'on ne voit pas,
> Pour faire épanouir la rate du vulgaire.
> (P., 15)

In the final count, the artist is a play-actor, a charlatan; he is but a lowly entertainer, a saltimbanque, who must, for the amusement of the public, prostitute his talents as well as his sentiments, which are no longer his property, but have become a stage property to be displayed ("étaler tes appas") before the profanum vulgus. The following lines from Baudelaire's Choix de maximes consolantes sur l'amour come to mind:

> . . . le sentiment étant généralement bien porté,
> enrubannons notre coeur comme une frontispice.
> (P., 470)

Like Chatterton, he realizes the market value of his personal sentiments in the literary forum. In the same work, Baudelaire describes as follows the moral and emotional (both in the literary and the metaphorical sense of the word) dilemma of the poet "suant à rendre par des épigrammes au public de l'avant-scène les douleurs que ce public lui a faites dans l'être le plus cher" (P., 484). We note, once again, the contiguity of the axes of prostitution and histrionisme.

In the saltimbanque image of the final tercet, one can see, in ovo, Leoncavallo's I Pagliacci. If we evoke here the figure of Paillasse, it is in the context of its meaning for the nineteenth century, that is to say its associations with the theme of histrionic dédoublement. The term commonly referred to the miserable fairground artist, and, what is more, connoted the divided personality of the economically dependent artist. As Doutrepont[27] points out, the figure of Paillasse was a very common one in the nineteenth century, appearing in such works as Jouhaud's Paillasse of 1830; Le Vieux Paillasse, a vaudeville by Tuffel and Abel, of 1838; the celebrated Paillasse of Dennery and Fournier of 1850; Le Cousin de Paillasse, a vaudeville by Rochefort and Noiseuil, of 1851; and, of course, Leoncavallo's I Pagliacci of 1892. We note, in passing, Baudelaire's contribution to the Paillasse theme in La Fanfarlo, with its heavy emphasis on cabotinage as we find, for example, in Mme de Cosmelly's histoire narrating the trials and tribulations of her marriage.[28] It is not without significance that her very name is redolent of a certain division (i.e., co + mêlée):

> Je me suis faite spirituelle et enjouée quand j'avais la mort dans le coeur. J'ai pailleté mon désespoir avec des sourires étincelantes. (P., 499-500)

One wonders whether Baudelaire was familiar with the following text of L.S. Mercier in his Nouvel Essai sur l'art dramatique, strongly reminiscent of the Hugolian grotesque:

> Il était à la foire un pauvre diable, qui tout nud [sic] et le ventre creux, était obligé de rire au balcon de la parade, pour faire rire la populace. Il fit de si grands efforts pour vaincre son penchant, que sa bouche en contracta un rire convulsif et continu qui faisait horreur à voir.[29]

The essential structure of "La Muse vénale" is, in fact, one of ironic dichotomy: aesthetic flight opposed to material containment; the sacrosanctity of art contrasted with its desecration in the market place. From the cold and lofty palace, we have descended to the vulgar fairground via the cathedral[30]; it is the desecration of the latter which constitutes the pivot of the poem. The aesthetic proclamation ex cathedra has been abolished with the artist's expulsion from the palace (cathedral) of Art: the artist has, indeed, been literally expelled from his chair of authority. The warm atmosphere created by the incense, symbolic of the sanctity of art, offers but cold comfort to the professional artist who cannot escape the fundamental charlatanerie of his position, which is the price at which his existence, in the material sense of the word, must be bought. The man of letters, as Benjamin[31] points out, shows definite affinities with the whore. If we turn now to one of Baudelaire's projected prefaces for Les Fleurs du mal, we find the following ironic confession of the artist-sycophant:

> . . . moi-même, malgré les plus louables efforts, je n'ai su résister au désir de plaire à mes contemporains, comme l'attestent en quelques endroits, apposées comme un fard, certaines basses flatteries adressées à la démocratie, et même quelques ordures destinées à me faire pardonner la tristesse de mon sujet. (P., 187)

Baudelaire is not unaware that through the prostitution of his art he is, in some respects, rendered no better than the bourgeois philistines who are the constant butt of his criticism.

The artist must be considered as belonging to the vast family of pauvres inhabiting Baudelaire's works.[32] The poverty is of two sorts: that which engenders vice, as we see in "Le Crépuscule du soir," or that of stoic grandeur, as we see reflected in the impoverished widow of "Les Veuves." The artist possesses both these qualities, and, for this reason, finds certain affinities between his position and theirs. Although belonging to these social groups, he yet distinguishes himself from them: his destitution is greater than theirs in as much as theirs is relieved in some measure by society, whereas his is not. This distinction is laboured by Baudelaire in Le Musée classique du Bazar Bonne-Nouvelle:

> Avant d'exposer à nos lecteurs un catalogue et une appréciation des principaux ouvrages, constatons un fait assez curieux qui pourra leur fournir de tristes réflexions. Cette exposition est faite au profit de la caisse de secours de la société des artistes, c'est-à-dire en faveur d'une certaine classe de pauvres, les plus nobles et les plus méritants, puisqu'ils travaillent au plaisir le plus noble de la société. Les pauvres--les autres--sont venus immédiatement prélever leurs droits. En vain leur a-t-on offert un traité à forfait; nos rusés malingreux, en gens qui connaissent les affaires, présumant que celle-ci était excellente, ont préféré les droits proportionnels. Ne serait-il pas temps de se garder un peu de cette rage d'humanité maladroite, qui nous fait tous les jours, pauvres aussi que nous sommes, les victimes des pauvres? Sans doute la charité est une belle chose; mais ne pourrait-elle pas opérer ses bienfaits, sans autoriser ces razzias redoutables dans la bourse des travailleurs?
>
> --Un jour, un musicien qui crevait de faim organise un modeste concert; les pauvres de s'abattre sur le concert; l'affaire étant douteuse, traité à forfait, deux cents francs; les pauvres s'envolent, les ailes chargées de butin; le concert fait cinquante francs, et le violoniste affamé implore une place sabouleux surnuméraire à la cour des Miracles! --Nous rapportons des faits; lecteur, à vous les réflexions. (P., 867-868)

The latter anecdote is not without certain similarities with Banville's Pauvres Saltimbanques, where the fairground artists are left equally impecunious after their performance.

That the figure of the saltimbanque is inextricably linked with the theme of economic degradation in Baudelaire, there can be no doubt. In a letter to his mother of 5 June 1863, Baudelaire describes in the following terms the feelings of humiliation he experienced on account of the economic subjugation and moral tutelage created by the conseil judiciaire:

> . . . je passerai dans trois ans, dans un an peut-être, à travers ton conseil judiciaire (dussé-je l'avouer au ministre lui-même) comme un saltimbanque à travers un rond de papier. (Corr., II, 305)

Although Adam[33] attributes the theme of "La Muse vénale" to a biographical source, that is to say to Baudelaire's journalism, I feel that the implications of the poem are much broader. What Baudelaire conveys in this sonnet, is the plight of the socially emancipated artist in the nineteenth century, who, lacking the aesthetic integrity of the Parnassians, cannot claim, as does Leconte de Lisle in "Les Montreurs," a lofty indifference towards the profanum vulgus:

> Dans mon orgueil muet, dans ma tombe sans gloire,
> Dussé-je m'engloutir pour l'éternité noire,
> Je ne vendrai pas mon ivresse ou mon mal,
> Je ne livrerai pas ma vie à tes huées,
> Je ne danserai pas sur ton tréteau banal
> Avec tes histrions et tes prostituées.[34]

The sonnet "A une jeune saltimbanque," published in La Silhouette of 28 September 1845 under the name of Privat d'Anglemont, but later attributed by Jules Mouquet to Baudelaire,[35] also displays, in the fairground analogy, the theme of aesthetic degradation due to economic dependence. The aesthetic use of the fairground operates in a negative direction. It is no longer the picturesque transcription of the Romantics, but rather a metamorphosis from a euphoric to a dysphoric universe bringing out the tragic dichotomy of the fairground world with its brilliance and exuberance, but also its sordidness and infinite sadness. One is reminded here of Dickens' Hard Times, and of Rouault's description, in a letter to his friend Schuré, of the foundation of his aesthetic credo:

> Pour moi, depuis la fin d'un beau jour où la première étoile qui brille au firmament m'a je ne sais pourquoi étreint le coeur, j'en ai fait inconsciemment découler toute une poétique. Cette voiture de nomade arrêtée sur la route, le vieux cheval étique qui paît l'herbe maigre; le vieux pitre assis au coin de sa roulotte en train de repriser son habit brillant et bariolé, ce contraste de choses brillantes, scintillantes, faites pour amuser, et cette vie d'une tristesse infinie...[36]

Baudelaire's sonnet is essentially diptych in structure, the expansive merveilleux of the fairground (the first two quatrains and the first tercet) contrasting sharply with its ugly reality as presented in the final tercet. It must be admitted, however, that these states are not clearly demarcated, but commingle in all stanzas. The spangled finery of the performing artists contrasts sharply with the indigence of their daily lives constrained by economic contingency. The fairground evokes, nevertheless, a poetic world apart:

> Ta guitare enrouée et ta jupe à paillettes
> Etalaient à nos yeux le rêve des poëtes,
> La danseuse d'Hoffmann, Esmeralda, Mignon.
> (P., 224)

The ambiguity in the word "étalaient" seems to encapsulate the essential euphoria-dysphoria dialectic of the poem: the expansive rêverie becomes a commodity to be sold in the market place; the display is negated (it is literally dis-played). The dynamic "rêve" is transmuted into economic degradation and humiliation when the expansive dance of the "jeune saltimbanque" and the virility of her masculine partner become transfixed in the aesthetic indifference of the former, and the drunken inactivity and exploitation of the latter:

> Mais déchue à présent, te voilà, ma pauvre ange,
> Sultane du trottoir, ramassant dans la fange
> L'argent qui doit soûler ton rude compagnon.
> (ibid.)

The dream is shattered, in the same way that the dream of Olympia is smashed, along with the magic spectacles of Hoffmann. All that remains is the melancholic nostalgia of "Mignon." A possible subtitle for the sonnet could indeed be: "Kennst du das Land. . . ."

The sonnet "Sur les débuts d'Amina Boschetti," which introduces the series of occasional verse entitled Bouffonneries, and which was first published in La Vie parisienne of 1 October 1864, again presents the dancer as symbolic representative of the artist. It is a variation on a theme; the emphasis falls now on the alienation of the artist in a philistine society for which he is, nevertheless, obliged to perform. In this saynète, strangely suggestive of Verlaine's dramatic technique in "Sur l'herbe," the ethereal spirituality of the dancer, Amina, is juxtaposed with the crass insensibility of the bourgeois, and, furthermore, Belgian, audience. The following extract from Pauvre Belgique is a description of Baudelaire's own ecstatic appreciation of Amina:

> Un pauvre qui voit des objets de luxe, un homme triste qui respire son enfance dans les odeurs de l'Eglise, ainsi je fus devant Amina. . . . Le Gin. Le talent dans le Désert. On dit qu'Amina se désole. Elle sourit chez un peuple qui ne sait pas sourire. Elle voltige chez un peuple, où chaque femme pourrait avec une seule des pattes éléphantines écraser un millier d'oeufs. (P., 1318)

The "Invitation to the Dance" is heard by him alone: "Le Welche," or Everyman, bogged down in a sea of bourgeois pragmatism cannot possess a sensibility delicate enough to appreciate the spiritual qualities of the artist:

> Amina bondit, --fuit, --puis voltige et sourit;
> Le Welche dit: "Tout ça pour moi, c'est du prâcrit;
> Je ne connais, en fait de nymphes bocagères,
> Que celles de montagne-aux-herbes potagères."
> (P., 158)

To attempt to instill into the bourgeois philistine an appreciation of art is, in some measure, to degrade that art, for art, as Baudelaire asserts in his article on Poe, seeks to be autonomous, to be above "l'hérésie de l'enseignement"[37]: indeed, "si le poète a poursuivi un but moral, il a diminué sa force poétique; et il n'est pas imprudent de parier que son oeuvre sera mauvaise."[38] Hence, the prostitution of Amina's art which attempts to instill an aesthetic appreciation into minds besotted with a distillation of the alcoholic variety:

> Vous ignorez, sylphide au jarret triomphant,
> Qui voulez enseigner la walse à l'éléphant,
> . . . .
> Que sur la grâce en feu le Welche dit: "Haro!"
> Et que le doux Bacchus lui versant du bourgogne,
> Le monstre répondrait: "J'aime mieux le faro!"
> (ibid.)

Spiritual intoxication can have no meaning for the profanum vulgus.

This incompatibility between the ideal and the real, which lies at the heart of Romanticism, is humorously portrayed in the prose poem

"La Soupe et les nuages," which is again presented in the form of a saynète. The theme is that of the "Amina" sonnet: art can have no place in a prosaic universe:

> Ma petite folle bien-aimée me donnait à dîner, et par la fenêtre ouverte de la salle à manger je contemplais les mouvantes architectures que Dieu fait avec les vapeurs, les merveilleuses constructions de l'impalpable. . . .
>
> Et tout à coup je reçus un violent coup de poing dans le dos, et j'entendis une voix rauque et charmante, une voix hystérique et comme enrouée par l'eau-de-vie, la voix de ma chère petite bien-aimée, qui disait: "--Allez-vous bientôt manger votre soupe, s.... b.... de marchand de nuages?" (P., 298)

The term "marchand" cannot but be ironic: it is precisely because he cannot be a cloud-monger, that is to say, because he cannot make a saleable commodity of his art, that scorn is heaped upon him by his fish-wifely mistress. It is of importance to note the alimentary nature of this anecdote. We have summarized here, the "dualisme chronique" (P., 992) of which Baudelaire speaks in De l'essence du rire, the conflict between idealism and reality leading, of necessity, to a schizoid situation, as we see in the divided personality of Giglio Fava-Cornelio Chiapperi, simultaneously histrion and prince. It is not without significance that the "dualisme chronique" is associated with the stage. One might juxtapose, at this point, the following scene from La Princesse Brambilla: believing that he is in the presence of his beloved princess, Giglio-Cornelio receives, in recompense for the adulation of his princess, the following string of abuse from his real mistress, the seamstress Giacinta:

> Alors une grosse voix lui corna aux oreilles: "Faquin de petit-maître avec ton bleu d'azur et ton rose, comment peux-tu seulement vouloir te faire passer pour le prince Cornelio? Rentre chez toi et dors ton saoul, butor que tu es!"[39]

The prose poem "Les Vocations," published in Le Figaro of 14 February 1864, offers a variation of the theme of the artist-as-saltimbanque. The negative connotations of the starving mountebank of "La Muse vénale" are substituted, here, by a more positive vision: the mountebanks are presented in terms of an ideal, the footloose, bohemian musician symbolizing the proud independence of the artist free to choose his own audiences and his own itineraries. It is for this reason that Baudelaire describes them as "très-fiers, quoique en guenilles, avec l'air de n'avoir besoin de personne" (P., 283), and for this reason too that the artists of the established circus do not appear in Baudelaire's works. "Les artistes de cirques établis--écuyères, acrobates, dompteurs et clowns--," explains Füglister, "n'apparaissent pas dans le monde baudelairien; pour lui, ils appartiennent évidemment trop au spectacle organisé et commercial qui fausse aussi bien l'art que la vie."[40] Like the saltimbanques of Banville's Pauvres Saltimbanques, Baudelaire's bohemian musicians succeed in maintaining their aesthetic integrity despite, paradoxically, their economic dependence on the crowd: their art is their own: their art is produced for the sake of art; the material recompense is but accidental:

> . . . ils ont continué à jouer leur musique de sauvages même après que la foule s'est dispersée. Enfin ils ont ramassé leurs sous. . . . (P., 283)

Although Baudelaire lacks the rhetorical verbosity of Banville's pronouncements (". . . qu'est-ce que le saltimbanque, sinon un artiste indépendant et libre. . . . Ah! malheur à ceux, malheur à celles d'entre nous qui ne reconnaissent pas leurs frères dans ces bouffons aux pieds souillés de poussière, aux lèvres souriantes, aux fronts tachés avec la lie de Thespis!"[41]), the message is the same: despite certain economic constraints the artist can still proudly maintain his independence. As Roger de Beauvoir explains in his novel of 1834 entitled Il Pulcinella, the artist possesses the capacity to differentiate between an authentic and an ersatz form of art; even if his art must be transformed into a saleable commodity, the artist, nevertheless, still maintains the possibility of proffering a spurious art form to the insensitive populace, thereby retaining intact his true art, spared from the gaze of the profanum vulgus:

> Mais ta poésie, n'est-il pas vrai, tu ne la leur vends pas? Tu la gardes, et voilà ce qui est beau![42]

The bohemian artist maintains his aesthetic integrity by his refusal to perform to the crowd. His bohemianism also symbolizes his refusal to commit himself to any particular aesthetic credo, his lack of commitment to any specific canons of art:

> Moi, voulant savoir où ils demeuraient, je les ai suivis de loin, jusqu'au bord de la forêt, où j'ai compris seulement alors, qu'ils ne demeuraient nulle part. (P., 283)

Once again, we find a parallel with Banville's saltimbanques:

> Car, s'il vous plaît, qu'est-ce que le saltimbanque, sinon un artiste indépendant et libre . . . , qui chante au soleil et danse sous les étoiles, sans l'espoir d'arriver à aucune académie?[43]

In sharp contradistinction to the dis-graced saltimbanque of "La Muse vénale" or "Le Vieux Saltimbanque," the bohemian becomes the symbol par excellence of the artist's integrity, whether on the spiritual or the material plane. Although the following description by Füglister applies strictly to Banville, it can, indeed, be understood in a Baudelairian context as being representative of that fundamental aesthetic independence which constitutes the Baudelairian ideal:

> So ergibt sich von selbst, dass Banville die Künstler und vor allem die lyrischen Dichter nicht nur wegen ihrer gemeinsamen Liebe zu Rhythmus, Harmonie und Exaktheit mit den Jahrmarktartisten vergleicht, und auch nicht allein, weil sie als "frei Schaffende" in einer Geld bestimmten Welt der Gemeinplätze innerlich unabhägig und naturverbunden ("instinctifs") geblieben sind, sondern ebensosehr, weil sie sich als "exilés" . . . in eine unsensible, tieferer Schönheit verschlossene Gesellschaft verbannt fühlen, deren launisch verteilte Lorbeeren die Bitterkeit des Ephemeren anhaftet.[44]

But the price at which aesthetic integrity may be had is dear; general incomprehension and antipathy are its natural concomitants. The young boy, the "incompris" of "Les Vocations," who may be considered as belonging, by extension, to the family of saltimbanques (". . . j'ai vue, à la dernière foire du village voisin, trois hommes qui vivent comme je voudrais vivre," P., 283), thus symbolizes the exile and pariahdom of the Romantic artist, a theme which Baudelaire expounds in his articles on Poe, where we find revived the hoariest of Romantic notions, the image of the martyred poet--a theme taken up again in "Bénédiction," "L'Albatros," "Le Guignon," "Sur le Tasse en prison," and "Le Vieux Saltimbanque," amongst others. Whatever the political regime, the artist still remains an exile from society:

> . . . le poète ne pouvait trouver une bonne place ni dans une société démocratique ni dans une aristocratique, pas plus que dans une république que dans une monarchie absolue ou tempérée.[45]

True to the spirit of paradox inherent in Romanticism, bohemianism thus comprises two distinct ideologies: on the one hand is implied the spirit of the mandarinate, while on the other, is implied the social alienation of the artist. Graña aptly summarizes this paradoxical schism thus:

> . . . if one side of the literary reaction against the middle class has been the spirit of the mandarinate--the discretion and loftiness of the self-created intellectual aristocrat before the money-and-tools secularity of the businessman--another side was the championing of the street-corner folk, the Bohemians.[46]

In the prose poem "Les Bons Chiens," originally published in L'Indépendance belge of 21 June 1865, Baudelaire's idealism concerning the aesthetic integrity of the artist no longer prevails: the artist has succumbed to economic servitude, selling his work and himself for a mere trifle. It is a portrait of the artist-as-performing-dog ("le chien saltimbanque"): the pathos associated with the clown figure, whether Pierrot or saltimbanque, has been replaced by a more sardonic viewpoint, which, it must be admitted, is not without its comical aspects--hence the opening reference to Sterne.

The prose poem is clearly a verbal transposition of Joseph Stevens' painting entitled Intérieur de saltimbanque,[47] which the poet saw in the home of the Belgian senator Prosper Crabbe; in the Catalogue de la collection de M. Crabbe, Baudelaire notes the following:

> Joseph Stevens: Misérable logis de saltimbanques. Tableau suggestif. Chiens habillés. Le saltimbanque est sorti et a coiffé un de ses chiens d'un bonnet de houzard pour le contraindre à rester immobile devant le miroton qui chauffe sur le poele [sic]. Trop d'esprit.
> (P., 1201)

The ironic juxtaposition of material degradation ("Misérable logis") and spiritual excellence ("Trop d'esprit") is expressed more emphatically in the prose poem. In the latter, however, these two aspects are ironically synthesized in the "oeuvre sans nom":

> Permettez-moi de vous introduire dans la chambre du saltimbanque absent. Un lit, en bois peint, sans rideaux, des couvertures traînantes et souillées de punaises, deux chaises de paille, un poêle de fonte, un ou deux instruments de musique détraqués. Oh! le triste mobilier! Mais regardez, je vous prie, ces deux personnages intelligents, habillés de vêtements à la fois éraillés et somptueux, coiffés comme des troubadours ou des militaires, qui surveillent, avec une attention de sorciers, l'oeuvre sans nom qui mitonne sur le poêle allumé, au centre de laquelle une longue cuiller se dresse, plantée comme un de ces mâts aériens qui annoncent que la maçonnerie est achevée. (P., 308-309)

The economic constraints imposed upon the work of art, that is to say the alimentary nature of the "oeuvre," could not be expressed more clearly. The material destitution ("le triste mobilier") and spiritual grandeur ("ces deux personnages intelligents") of the artist-as-performing-dog are once again juxtaposed. The confusion of spiritual and material allegiance is borne out in the image of the "cuiller-mât": the "mât" represents the proud culmination of the "maçonnerie" in the form of the work of art (given the prior reference to the dog-artist as "sorcier," we feel that it would not be remiss to interpret this metaphor as referring to the masonic brotherhood, and hence the confrérie of artists). The "mât" is likened to the "cuiller" because the completion of the "oeuvre" for the dog-artist spells material gratification in the form of his supper. The economic servitude of the dog-artist is, however, explicitly excused by the poet:

> N'est-il pas juste que de si zélés comédiens ne se mettent pas en route sans avoir lesté leur estomac d'une soupe puissante et solide? Et ne pardonnerez-vous pas un peu

> de sensualité à ces pauvres diables qui ont à affronter tout le jour l'indifférence du public et les injustices d'un directeur qui se fait la grosse part et mange à lui seul plus de soupe que quatre comédiens? (P., 309)

The comparison between artist and "chien saltimbanque" becomes more explicit in the latter half of the prose poem, where the poet explains the raison d'être of the work. Apart from the pictorial inspiration, the prose poem was inspired by the following event, of which Auguste Poulet-Malassis gives the following account:

> Un soir, enfin, que M. Baudelaire se trouvait à la taverne Horton, il s'exclama, à si haute voix, et en prenant à témoin les amis présents, sur la beauté du gilet de M. Stevens, qui entrait, que celui-ci repartit: "Eh bien! mon cher Baudelaire, puisque vous le trouvez si beau, le voulez-vous?"... "Comment, si je le veux? Mais voilà deux mois que j'en meurs d'envie!"[48]

The prose poem was written in gratitude to M. Stevens. In the prose poem the events are transposed such that the "beau gilet," instead of being the source of inspiration of the work, becomes the material gratification for the artist's work ("Le poète qui a chanté les pauvres chiens a reçu pour récompense un beau gilet," P., 309). Whilst, on the one hand, the stature of the artist is magnified by the comparison with the Renaissance artist receiving his gratification, both spiritually and materially, from his maecenas ("Tel un magnifique tyran italien, du bon temps, offrait au divin Arétin soit une dague enrichie de pierreries, soit un manteau de cour, en échange d'un précieux sonnet ou d'un curieux poëme satirique," ibid.), the artist's stature is, on the other hand, severely depreciated by the specific comparison with the "chien saltimbanque" ("Et toutes les fois que le poëte endosse le gilet du peintre, il est contraint de penser aux bons chiens, aux chiens philosophes. . .," ibid.). That the "chiens philosophes" represent the "chiens saltimbanques" is confirmed by the description of the latter as "personnages intelligents" (P., 308). Like the "chien saltimbanque," the poet is finely attired in his "beau gilet": it is not unreasonable to suppose that the economic servitude pertaining to the "chien saltimbanque" applies equally to the poet who has accepted material recompense as the pre-condition for his art:

> Je chante le chien crotté, le chien pauvre, le chien sans domicile, le chien flâneur, le chien saltimbanque, le chien dont l'instinct, comme celui du pauvre, du bohémien et de l'histrion, est merveilleusement aiguillonné par la nécessité, cette si bonne mère, cette vraie patronne des intelligences. (P., 307)

One might note, in parenthesis, the contiguity of the worlds of poverty and histrionisme. From performing clown, we descend to the spectacle of the artist as performing dog.[49] The ironic self-portrait of the artist could not be more derisive.

In the prose poem "Le Vieux Saltimbanque," which appeared in La Revue Fantaisiste of 1 November 1861, the identification between the saltimbanque and the man of letters is most explicit. Whilst the conclusion clarifies, or rather over-clarifies, the symbolic significance of the saltimbanque, the whole poem must be considered in an allegorical light. The importance of the saltimbanque is evident from the first through the presentation of the latter as a figure of profound contrast. A violent opposition is established between the fairground and the saltimbanque: between the glaring, blaring noise of the fair and the silence of the showman, between the vitality and energy being unleashed by performers and spectators alike and the complete inertia and absolute lassitude of the dejected saltimbanque: between the thronging crowd on the one hand, and the isolation of this desperate figure on the other. There is more to the fair, however, from which the saltimbanque is excluded, than its colour and noise, and although the atmosphere appears to be one of gay abandon, it is not a purely frivolous occasion: for the barkers and showground people it is an anxiously awaited event on account of its promise of material recompense:

> . . . les uns dépendaient, les autres gagnaient, les uns et les autres également joyeux. . . . Partout la joie, le gain, la débauche; partout la certitude du pain pour les lendemains. . . . Ici la misère absolue, la misère affublée pour comble d'horreur, de haillons comiques, où la nécessité, bien plus que l'art, avait introduit le contraste. (P., 248)

The worlds of poverty and histrionisme are fused again in the costuming of the former ("la misère affublée"). The saltimbanque's exclusion from the general jubilation thus signifies his exile from the material world in which he must make his living, his exile from his public on whom he must depend for his living. The concluding statement in unequivocal:

> Je viens de voir l'image du vieil homme de lettres qui a survécu à la génération dont il fut le brillant amuseur; du vieux poëte sans amis, sans famille, sans enfants, dégradé par sa misère et par l'ingratitude publique, et dans la baraque de qui le monde oublieux ne veut plus entrer. (P., 249)

Baudelaire expressly states the symbolic significance of the "vieux saltimbanque": the modern man of letters constitutes a "survie anti-héroïque"[50] (contrast "Une Mort héroïque") in a post-maecenic era: he no longer occupies the glorified position of official entertainer ("le brillant amuseur") in an aristocratic society. It is in this light that we must understand the episode pertaining to the author's attempt to venture some small offering to the humiliated artist-saltimbanque. His subsequent failure, it will be noted, is caused by the surging crowd. The alienation of the artist from his public and from the economic sanctions offered by that public could not be illustrated more emphatically. There could no longer exist between the modern man of letters and his now impersonal audience any form of cultural commensalism as there had done between the artist of the Old Régime and his patron. Hence the spiritual exile of the artist, symbolized here by the "abdication" of the saltimbanque. The pathetic, humiliated figure of the "vieux saltimbanque" thus symbolizes both the spiritual and social alienation of the modern artist. Crépet[51] interprets this prose poem in neo-positivist fashion, taking it to allude to the fact that following the bankruptcy of Poulet-Malassis, Baudelaire was without an editor. I would suggest, however, that it has a much broader historical significance: through the "vieux saltimbanque," Baudelaire expresses the dilemma facing the modern artist in a post-maecenic era. His rôle has been taken from him literally and metaphorically: the modern artist, like the "vieux saltimbanque" who has abdicated, is deprived of any function, of any raison d'être. Having no claim to dignity, the modern artist is no more than a pathetic spectacle.

One might add in passing that Daumier's profoundly moving watercolour, La Parade, is, in all essential details, the pictorial equivalent of "Le Vieux Saltimbanque": it too depicts the mountebank deserted by the public for other fairground performers. The most striking difference between the two, however, is the fact that while Daumier's mountebank attempts, even if in vain, to attract the crowd, Baudelaire's saltimbanque has renounced any such attempt.

"Le Vieux Saltimbanque" inevitably brings to mind Banville's Les Pauvres Saltimbanques, which could possibly have influenced Baudelaire, given the fact that it was published in 1853.[52] In both, we find the indisputable identification of poet and saltimbanque, as well as the theme of public ingratitude. There are, however, certain fundamental differences. In Banville, the crowd is appreciative enough, but for reasons of prejudice and snobbery refuses to make any contribution, and those members of the crowd who are also artists refuse to be associated with such lowly creatures as the saltimbanques. Banville exhorts his fellow-artists to remember that they are all brothers, that they are all, in the final analysis, "de pauvres saltimbanques" and that they all bear the stigmata of their profession:

> Ah! malheur à ceux, malheur à celles d'entre nous qui ne reconnaissent pas leurs frères dans ces bouffons aux pieds souillés de poussière, aux lèvres souriantes, aux fronts tachés avec la lie de Thespis! Ils n'ont pour récompense que quelques gros sous, et l'amour du printemps et le mépris des sots; mais quelles sont les nôtres? Leur couronne est faite de paillon, leurs joyaux de verroterie, leur propre est un haillon déteint; mais, s'il vous plaît, de quoi est faite notre couronne, de quoi nos joyaux, de quoi notre pourpre?[53]

In the end, a couple of penniless actors give a few pence to the performers, who go off to console themselves with a meager supper. Baudelaire, on the other hand, shows us a figure in complete isolation: without friends, without family, without money, without recognition--in short, sans everything. Banville's saltimbanques can still perform and create an illusion of joy, much like the saltimbanques in Baudelaire's "Les Vocations"; they are ennobled by their poetry and by their suffering. Baudelaire's saltimbanque, however, has given up the struggle; he is, as Starobinski explains, "une figure pure d'échec."[54] Whereas the chagrins of Banville's saltimbanques can be, for a moment, assuaged by the donation of a small sum, the sorrows of the "vieux saltimbanque" are not susceptible of consolation, and so it is that the narrator is swept away by the crowd before he is able to leave his offering on one of the miserable boards of the stall. It will be remembered that Banville was already a successful young writer when Les Pauvres Saltimbanques was published: hence his comparative optimism concerning the situation of the artist. Baudelaire, however, at the time when "Le Vieux Saltimbanque" was published in 1861, had not, like Banville, known literary success: hence his more pessimistic analysis of the artist's condition. It must be admitted, however, that even the youthful Baudelaire of the Conseils aux jeunes littérateurs published in 1846, is not without a certain cynicism towards the literary trade.

The pathetic spectacle of the "vieux saltimbanque" has certain affinities with the cryptic symbol of the artist-Hercules, the "Hercule sans emploi" (P., 1180), as Baudelaire describes him in Le Peintre de la vie moderne, first published in Le Figaro of 1863, although probably composed some time between 1859 and 1860. "Le Vieux Saltimbanque," portrays the humiliation of the artist who has abdicated, who has admitted defeat and the ultimate uselessness of even attempting to attract an audience whereby he might achieve some ratification of his being. Like "le vieux saltimbanque," the Hercules has been deprived of an audience. However, the redundancy of the "Hercule sans emploi" is all the more poignant given the fact that he has not abdicated; although temporarily without a function, like the "histrion en vacances" of "La Béatrice," he presumably still has hopes of achieving one. Like the fairground Hercules (who, incidentally, reappears in the degraded Alcide of "A une jeune saltimbanque") who displays himself corporeally, the modern artist too must lay bare, not his body, but his heart. The Hercules, though, is, in some respects, unaware of the degradation inherent in his position; he is all body and no brains according to Baudelaire's description of him in "Le Vieux Saltimbanque" ("Les Hercules, fiers de l'énormité de leurs membres, sans front et sans crâne, comme les orang-outangs. . .," P., 248). But his physical body constitutes his livelihood and is thus a permanent reminder of his function.[55] Hence, the Baudelairian equation between the redundant Hercules and the modern artist, whose sensibility, the very stuff of which he is made, too constitutes a permanent reminder of his function, or rather, the lack of it.

The redundant Hercules is the very embodiment of frustrated potential, of directionless energy. Does this figure not have certain affinities with the Orphic mage whose grandiose pretensions ended in crushing defeat, humiliating ostracism and, what is more, social redundancy? Crystallized in this metaphor is the Romantic Icarus syndrome, the impossible megalomaniac ideal. This phenomenon is also evident in other clown figures of the nineteenth century, whether in the self-destruction of Banville's clown in his search for the infinite, in "Le Saut du tremplin"--a theme echoed in the Goncourts' Frères Zemgano, or in Mallarmé's "Pitre châtié" whose acceptance of the real world constitutes his fall from the Ideal. "La Chute," as Bachelard indicates, is "une sorte de maladie de l'imagination de la montée, comme la nostalgie inexpiable de la hauteur."[56].

It is significant to remember, too, that Baudelaire's description of the artist as unemployed Hercules is, indeed, a reference to the artist as dandy. The dandy, as Baudelaire defines him in his essay on Guys, is a symbol of frustrated potential; he is, essentially, a would-be hero in a post-heroic age who represents the individual's attempt to affirm his aristocratic autonomy in a rising sea of democratic equality. The analogies with the position of the modern artist are self-evident:

> Le dandysme apparaît surtout aux époques transitoires où la démocratie n'est pas encore toute-puissante, où l'aristocratie n'est que partiellement chancelante et avilie. . . . Le dandysme est le dernier éclat d'héroïsme dans les décadences. (P., 1179)

The symbol of the unemployed Hercules represents not only the obsolescence, lack of orientation and social redundancy of a particular aristocratic class, the dandy, as well as a particular intellectual aristocracy, the artist, but also represents, as Wohlfarth[57] explains, the malaise of the whole generation of bourgeois youth under the Restoration and the July Monarchy:

> The heroic epochs of the French Revolution and the First Empire had awakened, mobilized, and developed all the dormant energies of the bourgeois class. This heroic

> epoch gave the best elements of the bourgeoisie the opportunity for the immediate translation into reality of their heroic ideals, the opportunity to live and die heroically in accordance with these ideals. The heroic period came to an end with the fall of Napoleon, the return of the Bourbons and the July Revolution.[58]

Not only do the various fairground artists such as the saltimbanques, the Hercules and the Alcides symbolize the dilemma of the modern artist, but the fairground itself comes to represent the plight of the artist in the nineteenth century. Baudelaire's "Prologue du Salon Caricatural de 1846," offers a variation on the theme of the divided saltimbanque of "La Muse vénale." Whilst the dichotomy between inner and outer worlds is expressed individually via the personification of "la Caricature," the theme is, by extension, amplified to apply to what one might term as a whole fairground psychology. In both cases, the external appearance belies the essential being; ambiguity arises from the dialectical synthesis which serves to emphasize the fundamental irony of the situation. In the case of the personified Caricature, the schism lies in the contrast between the aggressive deformation of caricatural art ("Je porte à chaque main, grimaçants et tordus,/Des trousseaux gémissants de peintres suspendus," P., 210), and its propensity towards divertissement ("J'ai l'orgueil, tant je suis innocent et naïf,/D'amuser ceux-là même à qui mon crayon vif/Infligea le tourment de la caricature," ibid.). The comparison with the fairground is quite explicit on this score ("Mon habit est connu dans les foires publiques"): the essential dichotomy inherent in caricatural art is likened to the fairground world because it too is founded on a schism, that is to say the ironic juxtaposition of the tinselled tawdriness of the fair, and the flagrant destitution of the fairground artist. "La réalité du Cirque," writes Genet, "tient dans cette métamorphose de la poussière en poudre d'or."[59]

Caricatural art is likened to the fairground not only on account of the aforementioned differential rapport, but also, and more importantly, on account of the economic associations implicit in both: both require economic sanctions from the public and are thus obliged to forfeit their aesthetic autonomy. In short, the caricaturist, much more than the classical artist, on account of the popular nature of his work, must not disallow public taste if he is to succeed, just as the fairground artist must take into consideration the sensibility, or rather lack of it, in his audience. Thus the ogre Caricature attempts to excuse "l'aspect malheureux de mon pourpoint chétif," and freely admits to the commercialization of his aesthetic endeavours:

> Car je sais le moyen d'élargir votre panse,
> Et crois que je ferai, je le dis entre nous,
> Rire pour mille francs plutôt que pour vingt sous.
> (ibid.)

That Baudelaire associated in his mind the fairground with the prostitution of art is evident in his letter to Catulle Mendès of 3 September 1865. Mendès, under the direction of Leconte de Lisle and in collaboration with Philoxène Boyer, was hoping to organize a soirée of poetry, at which he requested the presence of Baudelaire. Although excited by the idea, Baudelaire felt that the vast scope of the enterprise might not do justice to the individual poets represented:

> Le grand danger de votre entreprise, c'est de devenir une foire, une exhibition d'impuissances et de vanités, et de médiocrités. (Corr., II, 527)

"Exhibition": contained in this word is a [illegible] host of derogatory connotations: the degrading exhibition of [illegible], already observed in the Hercules image (we could perhaps superimpose, at this stage, the image of the monster exhibited on a pedestal, found in Baudelaire's dream recounted to his friend Charles Asselineau in a letter dated 13 March 1856)[60]; the exhibition or étalage of art in the literary market; the spectacle value of the work of art, that is to say its curiosity value for an uncomprehending public. "Impuissances," "vanités" and "médiocrités": these all refer to the essential moral dichotomy of the fairground discussed earlier: the artist is impotent to maintain the integrity of his art in the face of economic necessity, hence the vanitas and the mediocrity of his endeavours. The word "vanités" contains, in itself, the essential ambivalence which the artist experiences towards his work, that is to say both the pride and the vacuity of the aesthetic venture.

The associations of the fairground with materialism are incontestable: the value of the spectacle lies in its commercial potential rather than in its aesthetic attributes. Describing his eccentric mistress in "Portraits des maîtresses," published in the Revue Nationale of 21 September 1867, the raconteur coldly elucidates the qualities of his "phénomène vivant," that is to say her value as a spectacle, and a spectacle open to commercial exploitation:

> J'aurais pu faire ma fortune en la montrant dans les foires comme monstre polyphage. (P., 293)

We remember, at this stage, the importance of the spectacle to Baudelairian aesthetics, that is to say its "supernatural" and symbolic significance.[61] It is this aspect which is obliterated in the commercial fairground spectacle: the aesthetic spectacle is replaced by the spectacular. The following reference to the spectacle, both in the aesthetic and the commercial acceptation of the term, is found in a letter of Baudelaire to Sainte-Beuve of 4 May 1865, where he explains his "excitation bizarre qui a besoin de spectacles, de foules, de musique, de réverbères même" (Corr., II, 493). What is important, though, is that beyond the divertissement of the fairground, Baudelaire saw therein a moral allegory pertaining to the modern artist.

The synthesis of aesthetics, commercialism and fairground may be seen in the prose poem "La Femme sauvage et la petite maîtresse," published in La Presse of 27 August 1862. On the face of it, the poem appears as an extremely pessimistic analysis of human relations: the poet admonishes his bored and decadent mistress living in the lap of luxury, and reminds her, through the fairground analogy depicting the savage treatment of a woman who is literally made into a fairground spectacle by her cruel husband, that she too is no more than a bird in a gilded cage. Both, in the final analysis, are spectacles of one sort or another: both are materially dependent on the goodwill of their "keepers." "Tout pour moi devient allégorie," Baudelaire states in "Le Cygne," and so it is here that we must transcend the anecdotal level and interpret the figure of the woman as representing the Muse of the poet, whether in the form of "la petite maîtresse," somewhat of a decadent idol who represents, nevertheless, an aristocratic or classical type of muse, or in the form of "la femme sauvage," who represents a more mundane or modern muse. It is the latter which is of interest to us here in as much as the aesthetic spectacle consists in the actual alimentation of the woman: the act is also nourishing in the sense that it represents the livelihood of the artist. What is represented here in the allegorical mode, is the problematics of the consumer value of art which face the modern artist. In his Salon de 1846, Baudelaire notes the following:

> L'art est un bien infiniment précieux, un breuvage rafraîchissant et réchauffant, qui rétablit l'estomac et l'esprit dans l'équilibre naturel de l'idéal. (P., 874)

It is interesting to contrast here the "saltimbanque à jeun" of "La Muse vénale" with the gourmandizing of the female saltimbanque of the prose poem: both represent a different optic on the same motif, that is to say the problematics of the modern artist who must live by his art, both spiritually and materially. The same material orientation is evident when the narrator suggests a visit to the fairground to alleviate his mistress' ennui; what is stressed is not only the divertissement aspect which he proposes for her edification, but also the fact that the spectacle must be paid for in hard cash:

> Tenez, je veux essayer de vous guérir; nous en trouverons peut-être le moyen, pour deux sols, au milieu d'une fête, et sans aller bien loin. (P., 242)

The spectacle is not gratuitous, neither is it gratis.

The prose poem concludes with the fusion of the two muses: the "petite maîtresse" has been metamorphosed into a "maîtresse sauvage": the aristocratic, autonomous muse has been obliged to witness, and not only to witness but to incorporate into her being, the terre-à-terre qualities of the more vulgar muse. Art cannot exist in a rarefied atmosphere. Both from a practical and a thematic point of view, the artist must accept reality. Both these aspects, although emphasis is usually placed on the latter, constitute what may be termed Baudelaire's modernist aesthetics. The autonomous palace of art has accepted into its precincts the tainted trestles of the fairground, thereby forfeiting its autonomy to the onslaught of commercialism. It is in this light that we must understand the following description of the now degraded autonomous muse:

> . . . les pieds dans la fange et les yeux tournés vapoureusement vers le ciel. (P., 243)

The implications of this aesthetic degradation, that is to say the displacement of the classical Poet by the modern man of letters, will be discussed in the following chapter.

The prose poem entitled "Le Galant Tireur," which Baudelaire submitted, unsuccessfully, to the Revue Nationale in 1865, suggests a similar triad to the one found in the prose poem: the fairground and aesthetic elements are quite explicit: the commercialism, however, is inferred from the previous analogies of fairground and merchandizing.[62] The essentials of the anecdote are set down in Fusées XI:

> Un homme va au tir au pistolet, accompagné de sa femme. --Il ajuste une poupée, et dit à sa femme: Je me figure que c'est toi. --Il ferme les yeux et abat la poupée. --Puis il dit en baisant la main de sa compagne: Cher ange, que je te remercie de mon adresse! (P., 1258)

In the prose poem which is more detailed than the Fusées sketch, the woman is explicitly compared to the muse (". . . sa délicieuse, son exécrable femme, son inévitable et impitoyable Muse," P., 298). Hence the sarcastic jibe which links the woman and the doll, is extended to the figure of the muse. It is highly significant that the decapitation of the doll-muse is achieved through the fairground amusement: the fairground is literally the death of the muse, that is to say the fairground and its concomitant commercialism are, in the final resort, the reason for the destruction of art. Witness once again the degradation of art in the fairground analogy. The murderous fantasy perpetrated against the muse in "Le Galant Tireur" is quite the converse of the suppliant attitude of the poet towards his muse, as, for example, in "Le Fou et la Vénus": both, however, concern the degrada- of the poet; the degradation of the poet in the former is, after all, the root cause of the fantasized aggression.

Given the derogatory connotations of the fairground image, it is not surprising to find Baudelaire using the names of specific fairground artists as terms of insult or abuse. It must be admitted, though, that this usage is not peculiar to Baudelaire. The following contemptible inference in the term Jocrisse[63] (the archetype of the stupid clown, dating back to the ballets of Louis XIII) may be found in a letter addressed to E. Crépet of 10 April 1860:

> Comment voulez-vous que je recommence, pour la troisième fois, le passage relatif à ce jocrisse de Laprade, puisque je n'ai pas l'épreuve sous les yeux? (Corr., II, 21)

The following example illustrates more precisely the disparagement implicit in the term: it is a letter to his mother of 6 June 1862:

> Tu ignores donc encore qu'Ancelle est pour moi le parfait fléau et qu'il est pour les deux tiers dans tous les accidents de ma vie. --Son nom représente pour moi "l'horrible plaie de ma vie," et lui, il est personnellement un homme insupportable , le type de jocrisse, du lambin, de l'hurluberlu, et de l'homme de désordre. (Corr., II, 249)

Similarly, the term Polichinelle is used in derogatory fashion. In a letter to Nadar of 16 May 1859, Baudelaire writes:

> . . . as-tu seulement remarqué avec quel à-propos sont venues les "lettres diplomatiques de Joseph de Maistre," . . . lettres où, pour le dire en passant, le pape est traité en Polichinelle? (Corr., I, 579)

We remember, at this stage, Baudelaire's characterization of Polichinelle as "une figure ridicule" (P., 909) in his description of Penguilly-L'Haridon's painting entitled Pierrot présente à l'assemblée ses compagnons Arlequin et Polichinelle in his Salon de 1846. If Baudelaire's subsequent reaction to his own impressions of Penguilly is now superimposed onto this tableau, the latter will be seen in terms of the Polichinelle figure: the social alienation of the artist is expressed in the ridiculous posturing of the mime: in the previously mentioned letter to Nadar, Baudelaire writes:

> Enfin pour tout dire, parmi les noms que j'avais passés en revue, je m'étais surtout arrêté sur . . . Penguilly. . . . Ces noms avaient pour moi le grand avantage d'offrir une signification romantique en parfait accord avec mes goûts et répondant par une certaine forfanterie à l'ingratitude et à la négligence de ce siècle. (Corr., I, 577)

A similar notion of disesteem is found in the term marionnette, which Baudelaire hurls contemptuously at his rival for the chair of Lacordaire at the Académie, Prince Albert de Broglie, whom he felt, and perhaps rightly so, privileged not only by his social status, but, moreover, by the fact that his father, le duc Victor de Broglie, was already a member of the Académie. The image implies, naturally, apart from the general degrading fairground analogy, the machinations and manipulations required of the social puppet. Thus Baudelaire complains, in a letter to Mme Aupick of 25 December 1861, about "De Broglie, petite marionnette de la Revue des Deux Mondes, qui veut siéger à côté de son papa, qui fait partie de l'Académie, sans doute à titre d'ancien ministre" (Corr., II, 203).

The marionette image also has reverberations on a highly personal level. The term is used mockingly by Baudelaire in reference to his ironic self-portrait. Enclosing a photograph of himself which Carjat had taken around 1861-1862, Baudelaire writes, in a letter to his mother of 10 July 1861:

> Cette petite marionnette que j'insère dans ma lettre est le commencement des portraits successifs que le photographe doit faire pour guider le graveur. (Corr., II, 178)

The puppet image could well refer to what Baudelaire felt to be the literary industry of his day which literally tied the author to his publisher. It is interesting to note that the term marionnette actually implies the desacralization of what was once sacred: the marionnette no longer implies the mariolette with its original sacred function: the mariolette, the sacred wooden Marie-doll has been superseded by the meretricious fairground marionnette. The commercialism inherent in the fairground image is most evident when interpreted in a neo-positivist light: robbed of material independence after the conseil judiciare, Baudelaire must indeed have felt himself to be no more than a puppet, the puppet, ironically, of the jocrisse Ancelle.

The term bouffon is used by Baudelaire on several occasions as a term of contempt. In his quasi-treatise on laughter entitled De l'essence du rire, first published in Le Portefeuille of 8 July 1855, Baudelaire sketches a satirical portrait of the charlatans of academe, incapable of appreciating art per se without the aid of dogmatic constraints:

> Ces braves gens [that is to say the "professeurs jurés de sérieux, charlatans de la gravité"] laissaient passer à côté d'eux la comédie de Robert Macaire sans y apercevoir de grands symptômes moraux et littéraires. Contemporains de Rabelais, ils l'eussent traité de vil et de grossier bouffon. (P., 976)

The irony in the term bouffon, conveyed in the transference of the epithet, is worth noting. Ironically, too, Baudelaire himself falls into the very pedantry which he has just decried, when he attempts to demarcate the boundaries of the comique, which he defines with the aid of such philosophers as Joseph de Maistre, Bossuet and Bourdaloue,

Baudelaire uses the term bouffon in similar fashion in a letter to Philoxène Boyer, where he describes Eugène Crépet's reaction to his (Baudelaire's) notice concerning Pétrus Borel--a work which Crépet later rejected for his anthology of French poets:

> Détail comique: il [Crépet] croit que je lui ai joué une farce en faisant un Pétrus Borel. Il croit que Borel est un bouffon indigne de figurer dans la collection Crépet.
> (Corr., II, 46)

Whilst the above examples specifically equate the bouffon with the artist or writer, the term does not necessarily refer to the artist, but may be used, although this is the exception rather than the rule in Baudelaire's case, as a general term of abuse, as, for example, in the following extract from Pauvre Belgique of 1864, an expanded version of the *Lettres belges* which Baudelaire had intended to publish in *Le Figaro*. Although the example is insignificant as to its content, it is of importance to note that the italics indicate Baudelaire's underlining in red crayon of certain words and phrases:

> Le Président, --J'ai laissé dire hier par M. Soenens le mot de *bouffonnerie*. Je veux qu'une grande latitude soit laissé à cette discussion. Mais je ferai respecter le réglement. (P., 1404)

Interjecting over the propriety, or rather impropriety, of using the term *bouffon*, a certain M. Allard retorted: "--*Il fallait dire cela hier, quand on a appellé M. Bara bouffon*" (ibid.).

Not only does the term *bouffon* indicate a sense of disesteem and contempt, but connotes, conterminously, that which is comical and derisory. With that irony born of lucid introspection coupled with world-weariness, Baudelaire thus speaks, in a letter to Ancelle of 30 January 1866, of ". . . ma *bouffonne*, mais *très-intentionnée* candidature à l'Académie" (*Corr.*, II, 580). As with the depiction of the tragically grotesque jester in "Le Fou et la Vénus" by way of the oxymoron "bouffon volontaire," so this example offers a similar juxtaposition. It is almost as if the risible nature of the *bouffonnerie* were dulcified and purged of its negative qualities through the voluntariness. Indeed, the term does on occasion, as we shall see, have a positive connotation, conveying a high seriousness very far removed from the original sense of derision and disesteem, as, for example, in Baudelaire's sardonic mockery of the Prince de Broglie's candidacy for the Academy:

> Mais où la bouffonnerie éclate dans toute sa magistrale ampleur, c'est à propos de la plus bouffonne et abracadabrante candidature qui fût jamais inventée, de mémoire d'Académie. (Une Réforme à l'Académie, P., 762)

Similarly, the anecdote, in a letter to Ancelle of 21 December 1865, concerning Léopold II also conveys a sense of what is comical, and hence beneath respect:

> Le nouveau Roi a fait son entrée triomphale sur un air des Bouffes-Parisiens, "C'est le roi barbu qui s'avance." C'est la faute d'un naïf Allemand dirigeant l'orchestre militaire. Ce peuple [les Belges] est si profondément bête que personne n'a trouvé cela bouffon. (Corr., II, 550)

The examples of this type are numerous (see Appendix A); their increasing frequency towards the latter years of Baudelaire's life would seem to indicate a growing sense of frustration and exasperation, an ever increasing awareness of the comic pantomime that is life.

The bouffon appears in the poetic universe of Baudelaire in a somewhat ambiguous historical setting: whilst the historical universe conjured up is, on the whole, ancient or even legendary, it is not without its references to the modern world. It is worthy of note that the equation between bouffon and artist in most of these works is quite explicit. Although heavily concerned with aesthetics, these works do, nevertheless, indicate the social plight of the artist. The following chapter will be devoted to the aesthetic implications of the bouffon image: the focus of this chapter is on the social implications of this symbol.

In the prose poem "Le Fou et la Vénus," published in La Presse of 26 August 1862, the predicament of the modern artist is conveyed through the powerful dialectic between ethereal supernaturalism (in the Baudelairian sense of the word) and solid historicism, the latter being overwhelmed, and in some measure incorporated into the former, thereby undergoing a type of negative assimilation. The prose poem opens with the poet's experience of one of those rare and precious "belles heures" (P., 735) described with such enthusiasm in his study on Banville:

> Quelle admirable journée! Le vaste parc se pâme sous l'oeil brûlant du soleil comme la jeunesse sous la domination de l'Amour. (P., 236)

Typically, as in the famous letter to Fernand Desnoyers of 1853-1854 (Corr., I, 248), the poet's thoughts desert the utopian summits and turn, ultimately, to the human condition ("Cependant, dans cette jouissance universelle, j'ai aperçu un être affligé," P., 237). The narrator presents a suppliant jester, half grotesque, half tragic, a figure whose utter solitude and ridiculous pose are accentuated by the euphoric "extase universelle" (P., 236):

> Aux pieds d'une colossale Vénus, un de ces fous artificiels, un de ces bouffons volontaires chargés de faire rire les rois quand le Remords ou l'Ennui les obsède, affublé d'un costume éclatant et ridicule, coiffé de cornes et de sonnettes, tout ramassé contre le piédestal, lève des yeux pleins de larmes vers l'immortelle Déesse.
> (P., 237)

Baudelaire's detailed description of the jester's accoutrements place this figure in a solid historical setting: one envisions a Renaissance court, the fool with cap and bells taking his place in a society shaped by a belief in Divine order. In such a society, the jester has a specific function: to amuse the bored monarch, to alleviate his taedium vitae. But, as Baudelaire's play of antinomial epithets suggests, the position of the jester is fraught with ambiguity (this is reflected in the tessellated or "harlequin" style of the above quoted passage): the bouffon is, at one and the same time, "volontaire"[64] and "chargé," that is to say he is in a position of social dependence which demands that he adopt the rôle of the jester, a rôle which he can accept once having made the fundamental decision that this must be his means of livelihood, hence the "voluntary" aspect of his calling. Yet, his disposition towards the métier is, if anything, the converse, hence the epithets "chargé" and "artificiel." Social parasitism is, of necessity, incompatible with free will and human dignity. Whilst the aesthetic implications of the jester symbol will not be elaborated at this point, it is important to stress the fact that the jester is equated with the artist, thus the extrapolation to the social problematics concerning the modern artist, the adoption of voluntary constraints lying at the heart of the nineteenth-century artist's dilemma.

Although the prose poem is diptych in structure, as Mauron[65] suggests, the strict delineation between "orgie" and "solitude" which he proposes, is perhaps a little simplistic. Although there may be an apparent and even evident opposition between these two states, they are not, in fact, in radical contraposition; the euphoria or "orgie," whilst expansive, is essentially an isolating, centrifugal-centripètal experience, as Baudelaire himself explains in that other supernaturalist prose poem, "Le Confiteor de l'artiste," and the "solitude" of the second part is presented in such a "euphoric" manner as to obliterate its very reality. In fact, it is presented in the manner of a pantomime: one could almost imagine it as a scene mimed by Deburau at the Funambules. We remember, at this stage, that Baudelaire, like his friends Champfleury, Gautier and Nerval, frequently attended performances of fairy tales and pantomimes at the Funambules, and that Baudelaire even intended to write one himself:

> Concevoir un canevas pour une bouffonnerie lyrique ou féerique, pour une pantomime. (Fusées XV, P., 1261)

The prose poem may, indeed, be compared with the scene from Carné's Les Enfants du paradis, where Pierrot (Baptiste) is languishing before the statue of Phoebe (Garance).[66] The scene of the prose poem is doubly distanced: firstly, by the historical dépaysement, and secondly by the unreality of the pantomime, which has connotations of the euphoric supernaturalism of the introduction. It is almost as if the personal connotations contained in the symbol of the artist-jester were subtly repressed in these modes of distanciation, the pre-established order of things belied by the power of fantasy. Historicism and fantasy: is this amalgam not indicative of the dilemma facing the nineteenth-century artist, that is to say the historical legacy of social parasitism and the subsequent social emancipation of the artist in the post-revolutionary era, with its concomitant spiritual liberation?

As in the previous prose poem, the third "Spleen" poem of Les Fleurs du mal refers to the same historical period in time when the buffoon was kept as a retainer in the household of the aristocracy as "a good antidote against the insipidity and wearisomeness of ordinary life," as Schlegel puts it, "and as a welcome interruption of established formalities."[67] The tonality of the "Spleen" poem contrasts sharply, however, with that of the prose poem; whereas, in the latter, the scene is pervaded by a sense of effervescence and vitality, the mood of the "Spleen" poem is one of dark and oppressive melancholia. There is an overwhelming sense of abysmal ennui and hopelessness in this poem imbued with strong Hamletian overtones.[68] The youthful sovereign with his fateful lethargy, the grotesque posturings of the ineffective court jester, the general atmosphere of moral decadence, suggest a scene as disenchanting as the prose poem was enchanting:

> Du bouffon favori la grotesque ballade
> Ne distrait plus le front de ce cruel malade.
> (P., 70)

The "grotesque ballade" of the bouffon is redolent of an equally grotesque social universe. What we have, in this highly symbolic poem is, a negative affirmation of the artist's need for social emancipation: social servitude cannot but produce a grotesque caricature of what is art. In a static, hierarchical universe, the artist is no more than a grotesque buffoon.

Whereas the prose poem "Le Feu et la Vénus" and the "Spleen" poem offered an indirect rejection of the status quo, the prose poem "Une Mort héroïque," first published in La Revue Nationale of 10 October 1863, erupts in explicit revolt against the established order. Once again the presentation is allegorical, the theme being developed in the manner of a conte extraordinaire. Although there exists a historical dépaysement, Fancioulle, the protagonist, is a resolutely modern character who seems to have been, in part, taken from Baudelaire's reminiscences of the great Deburau, and also, in some measure, from an English Pierrot whom he describes at length in De l'essence du rire, and whom the author had seen on a Paris stage.[69]

From the outset it is clear that the *bouffon* is not the traditional frivolous, irresponsible and, moreover, apolitical creature of legend. Fancioulle's existence is not a gratuitous one: his rôle extends beyond the limits of his art when he chooses, like Mallarmé's *pitre*, to transcend, or rather transgress, the aesthetic circle. But it is ultimately on account of his art that he is forced into this paradoxical situation, for in his position of social subjugation, rebellion would seem to hold out the only hope for re-establishing artistic and moral integrity:

> Fancioulle était un admirable *bouffon*, et presque un des amis du Prince. Mais pour les personnes vouées par état au comique, les choses sérieuses ont de fatales attractions, et, bien qu'il puisse paraître bizarre que les idées de patrie et de liberté s'emparent despotiquement du cerveau d'un *histrion*, un jour Fancioulle entra dans une conspiration formée par quelques gentilshommes mécontents. (P., 269; the italics are mine.)

Fancioulle's fall from grace is rapidly charted: as a retainer in the household of the aristocracy he is an "admirable bouffon, et presque un des amis du prince": while accepted, or rather tolerated, in the aristocratic social set-up, he is in a position of unfranchised subordination, as the condescending epithet "admirable" and the ironic "presque" would seem to indicate. His rejection of the *status quo* renders him a contemptible "histrion" in the eyes of the establishment--ironically a position only marginally inferior to the status of the "admirable bouffon." His crime of *lèse-majesté*, ironically referred to by Baudelaire as "le déménagement d'une société," is symbolic of a violation of the established order; it is a transgression which proves the fundamental incompatability of art and society, of the poetic self and the empirical self. It finds its culmination in the symbolic death of Fancioulle: the execution of his art has proved to be his execution. Stressing the antagonism of poetry and world, Starobinski offers the following explication of the work: "Le poème en prose de Baudelaire se développe comme une réflexion imagée sur l'échec existentiel (et social) de l'artiste, en raison du manque d'être radical qui s'attache à la nature illusoire de l'art."[70] The "being" of art must be of the world, without which it is no more than a sublime pantomime. The problematics posed by Fancioulle's case indeed transcend their limited historical context to pose the eternal problem of the relationship of art to society, of the artist as being-in-the-world, to art as a fabrication (in both senses of the word) -of-the-world. It illustrates, in essence, that perilous equilibrium practised by the artist-*funambule* walking the tight-rope between the external exigencies of society and the internal exigencies of the creative self.

In Baudelaire's projected "Epilogue" for the second edition of *Les Fleurs du mal*, which dates from 1860, the following apparently incongruous category appears amongst the various inhabitants of modern Paris:

> Tes anges, tes bouffons neufs aux vieilles défroques.
> (P., 180)

What possible relevance could the traditional *bouffon* have in the resolutely modern context of this poem? It is only if, by analogy, we make the fundamental equation between *bouffon* and artist, that this phrase becomes meaningful. The "bouffons neufs" thus represent the new artists of the post-revolutionary era confronted with a new social structure in which their position is no longer pre-ordained and where literary sponsorship is replaced by the merchandizing of literature. The "bouffons neufs" do not succeed, however, as "professional" artists; they are indigent, they are indignant at being incapable of supporting themselves--hence the "vieilles défroques." The "vieilles défroques" must not only be understood on the material but also on the spiritual plane: the "défroques" denote the priestly mission of the Romantic artist, a priestly mission which is now in tatters: witness the antithetical juxtaposition of "vieilles" with "neufs." The appositional "Tes anges" would also seem to confirm this hypothesis.[71]

The "bouffons neufs" are none other than that vast gallery of fairground artists seeking to be "nourris" just like their modern counterparts on the literary scene. This constitutes the new bouffonnerie.

NOTES

[1] E. Welsford, The Fool: His Social and Literary History (Gloucester, Mass.: Smith, 1966), p. 195.

[2] For a historical study of this theme, see R.L. Füglister, "Baudelaire et le thème des bohémiens," Etudes Baudelairiennes, 2 (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1971), pp. 99-143.

[3] Ibid., pp. 114-115.

[4] L.N. Bescherelle, Dictionnaire national ou dictionnaire universel de la langue française (Paris: Simon, 1845-1847).

[5] Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française, 6th ed. (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1835).

[6] V. de Mars, "Revue littéraire: Le Théâtre et les livres," Revue des Deux Mondes, 19 (1847), 198.

[7] J.-P. Sartre, Baudelaire (Paris: Gallimard, 1963).

[8] Ibid., pp. 172-174.

[9] However, this was, in some ways, a spurious emancipation, as the Revolutionary government, the Empire, and even the Restoration continued governmental patronage of the arts: the incumbent aesthetic restrictions of the Ancien Régime were still in force.

[10] A. de Vigny, Chatterton (Paris: Garnier, 1968), p. 34.

[11] The interconnected themes of rôle playing and the lack of economic independence are evident, most notably, in Alexandre Dumas' Kean ou désordre et génie.

[12] A. de Vigny, op. cit., p. 79.

[13] P.-M. Alhoy, Les Mémoires de Bilboquet, recueillis par un bourgeois de Paris (Paris: Librairie Nouvelle, 1854), pp. 36-37.

[14] E. Briffault, "Des ouvriers de l'esprit: De ceux qui ne dînent pas," in *Le Diable à Paris: Moeurs et coûtumes, caractères et portraits des habitants de Paris* (Paris: Hetzel, 1846), II, 317.

[15] Gavarni, "Hommes et femmes de plume," in *Le Diable à Paris*, ibid., I, 122.

[16] Loc. cit.

[17] M. Shroder, *Icarus: The Image of the Artist in French Romanticism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961).

[18] P. Bénichou, *Le Sacre de l'écrivain: 1750-1830; essai sur l'avènement d'un pouvoir spirituel laïque dans la France moderne* (Paris: Corti, 1973).

[19] Ibid., p. 471.

[20] Ibid., p. 460.

[21] J. Huizinga, *Homo ludens: Essai sur la fonction sociale du jeu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), p. 321.

[22] P. Bénichou, op. cit., p. 453.

[23] T. Gautier, preface to *Les Jeunes France*, quoted by P. Bénichou, ibid., p. 460.

[24] W. Benjamin, "Zentralpark," *Schriften*, I (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1955), p. 478.

[25] Although a resolutely "modern" evocation, the figure of the *saltimbanque* has an ancient ancestry which can be traced back to the universe of Callot, to which Baudelaire's poem "Bohémiens en voyage" alludes. See R.L. Füglister, op. cit.

[26] I. Wohlfarth, in his thesis entitled "Aspects of Baudelaire's Literary Dandyism" (Diss. Yale 1971, p. 88) explains as follows the associations of *étalage* with *mauvais lieu*; he quotes from an historian of the period, in order to place *étalage* in its historical context: "It was in France that Emile Girardin (1836) founded the modern newspaper--*La Presse*--political but cheap, aimed at the accumulation of advertizing revenue, and made attractive to its readers by gossip, serial novels and various other stunts. (French pioneering in these dubious fields is still recalled by the very words 'journalism' and 'publicity' in English, 'Reklame' and 'Annonce'

in German.) Fashion, the department store, the public shop window which Balzac hymned ("Le grand poème de l'étalage chante ses strophes de couleur depuis la Madeleine jusqu'à la porte Saint-Denis"), were French inventions, the product of the 1820's" (E.J. Hobsbaum, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* [New York, 1964], p. 221).

[27] G, Doutrepont, *Les Types populaires de la littérature française* (Brussels: Lamertin, 1926), I, 166-171.

[28] As I shall be dealing with this motif in the protagonist, Samuel Cramer, at a later stage, I think it more suitable to choose the example of Mme de Cosmelly at present.

[29] Quoted by A. Ubersfeld, *Le Roi et le bouffon: Etude sur le théâtre de Hugo 1830-1839* (Paris: Corti, 1974), p. 96. These lines could be compared with Vigny's presentation of the imposture of art via the figure of the *comédienne* in "La Maison du berger":

> Si ton corps, frémissant des passions secrètes,
> S'indigne des regards, timide et palpitant;
> S'il cherche à sa beauté de profondes retraites
> Pour la mieux dérober au profane insultant;
> Si ta lèvre se sèche au poison des mensonges,
> Si ton beau front rougit de passer dans les songes,
> D'un impur inconnu qui te voit et t'entend. . . .
> (*Anthologie des poètes du dix-neuvième siècle*, ed. E. Maynial [Paris: Hachette, 1935], p. 195)

The heavy emphasis on the profanation of art has a peculiarly Baudelairian ring to it; one could, indeed, draw a parallel between the latter and the final tercet of "La Muse vénale."

[30] Witness once again, by extension, the juxtaposition of "pape" and "comédien" in the context of art.

[31] W. Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London: N.L.B., 1973), p. 34.

[32] See C. Mauron, *Le Dernier Baudelaire* (Paris: Corti, 1966). "Pauvreté," according to Mauron, is one of the three fundamental axes of the Baudelairian universe; the other two are "prostitution" and "histrionisme."

[33] A. Adam, *Baudelaire*: Les Fleurs du mal (Paris: Garnier, 1961), p. 284.

[34] Leconte de Lisle, *Poèmes barbares*, quoted by I. Wohlfarth, op. cit., p. 493.

[35] See W.T. Bandy, "Baudelaire ou Privat d'Anglemont," Le Figaro, 9 November 1929, quoted by P. Trottman, "French Criticism of Charles Baudelaire: Themes and Ideas," Diss. Georgia 1971, p. 357. Contrary to Bandy, Le Dantec (Baudelaire: Oeuvres complètes [Paris: Gallimard, 1961]) gives the date on which this sonnet appeared in La Silhouette as 27 September 1849.

[36] Quoted by J. Starobinski, "Portrait de l'artiste en saltimbanque," Les Cahiers du Chemin, 8 (1970), 93.

[37] "Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe," Curiosités esthétiques, l'art romantique et autres oeuvres critiques de Baudelaire (Paris: Garnier, 1962), p. 634.

[38] Ibid., p. 635.

[39] E.T.A. Hoffmann, Princesse Brambilla, trans. P. Sucher (Paris: Aubier, 1951), p. 89.

[40] R.L. Füglister, op. cit., p. 100.

[41] T. de Banville, Les Pauvres Saltimbanques (Paris: Lévy, 1853), p. 13.

[42] R. de Beauvoir, Il Pulcinella (Paris: Ledoux, 1834), p. 117.

[43] T. de Banville, loc. cit.

[44] R.L. Füglister, "Der Gaukler und Akrobat als alter Ego des Künstlers: Das Saltimbanque-motiv bei Baudelaire, Banville und Daumier," Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 15 (1967), p. 4.

[45] "Edgar Poe: Sa Vie et ses oeuvres," Curiosités esthétiques, op. cit., p. 595.

[46] C. Graña, Bohemian versus Bourgeois: French Society and the French Man of Letters in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1964), p. 206.

[47] There appears to be some uncertainty as to whether Baudelaire was referring to this painting or to a later work entitled La Chambre du saltimbanque.

[48] A. Poulet-Malassis, La Petite Revue, 27 October 1866, quoted by M. Zimmerman, "A Critical Edition of Charles Baudelaire's Petits Poèmes en prose," Diss. Wisconsin 1964, p. 242.

[49] For a detailed study of the artist as performing dog, see R. Chambers, "The Artist as Performing Dog," Comparative Literature, 23 (1971), 312-324.

[50] J. Starobinski, "Sur quelques répondants allégoriques du poète," Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, 67 (1967), 411.

[51] J. Crépet, Oeuvres complètes de Charles Baudelaire (Paris: Conard, 1923), p. 2878.

[52] It is interesting to note that it is precisely in the light of his funambulesque qualities that Baudelaire appreciates Banville. In a letter to Henry de la Madelène of 1866, Baudelaire writes: ". . . quelle singulière idée de ne représenter Banville que sous le jour des odes funambulesques!" (Corr, II, 604).

[53] T. de Banville, loc. cit.

[54] J. Starobinski, op. cit., p. 410.

[55] See Daumier's oil painting entitled Hercule de foire, which dates from circa 1865.

[56] G. Bachelard, L'Air et les songes (Paris: Corti, 1943), p. 111.

[57] I. Wohlfarth, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

[58] Lukács, Studies in European Realism (New York, 1964), p. 48, quoted by I Wohlfarth, ibid., p. 87.

[59] J. Genet, "Le Funambule," in Les Bonnes et L'Atelier de Giacometti (Décines, Isère: L'Arbalète, 1958), p. 183.

[60] For further clarification of this image, see M. Butor, Histoire extraordinaire: Essai sur un rêve de Baudelaire (Paris: Gallimard, 1961).

[61] See Journaux intimes: "Dans certains états de l'âme presque surnaturels, la profondeur de la vie se révèle tout entière dans le spectacle, si ordinaire qu'il soit, qu'on a sous les yeux. Il en devient le symbole" (P., 1257).

[62] For a similar equation of fairground, aesthetics and commercialism, see the prose poem "Le Joujou du pauvre" (". . . remplissez vos poches de petites inventions à un sol, --telles que le polichinelle. . ," P., 255).

[63] See G. Doutrepont, op. cit.

[64] A similar juxtaposition of epithets is to be found in the Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe (op. cit.): "Combien eût-il ri, de ce rire méprisant du poète qui ne grossit jamais la grappe de badauds, s'il était tombé . . . sur cette phrase mirifique qui fait rêver aux bouffonnes et volontaires absurdités des paillasses. . . ." (p. 625; the italics are mine.)

[65] C. Mauron, op. cit., p. 57.

[66] For a description of this scene, see M. Carné, Les Enfants du paradis, film script by J. Prévert (London: Lorrimer, 1968), p. 94.

[67] A.W. Schlegel, A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature (London: Bohn, 1846), p. 372.

[68] Cf. R. Lamont, "The Hamlet Myth," Yale French Studies, 33 (1964-1965), 84-87.

[69] There is a striking resemblance between Baudelaire's description of Deburau in De l'essence du rire, and Baudelaire's account of Fancioulle's acting in "Une Mort héroïque": (i) ". . . le Pierrot [anglais] n'était pas ce personnage pâle comme la lune, mystérieux comme le silence, souple et muet comme le serpent, droit et long comme une potence, cet homme artificiel, mû par des ressorts singuliers, auquel nous avait accoutumés le regrettable Deburau" (De l'essence du rire, P., 988).

(ii) "Le Sieur Fancioulle excellait dans les rôles muets ou peu chargés de paroles, qui sont souvent les principaux dans les drames féeriques dont l'objet est de représenter symboliquement le mystère de la vie" ("Une Mort héroïque," P., 271).

It is interesting to note, in parenthesis, the affinities between the above passages and the following comments by Gautier on Deburau's interpretation of Pierrot pendu: "Le peuple, dont le goût s'est corrompu à la longue, regarde la pantomime comme une chose frivole. . . . 'Tout ça c'est des bêtises.' --O béotiens en blouse et en casquette de loutre, qui préférez le bruissement fêlé des grelots de Momus au silence éloquent de Pierrot et de Cassandre qui parlent à coups de pieds et chantent à coups de poing! La foule a perdu le sens de ces hautes symboles, de ces mystères profonds qui rendent rêveurs le poète et le philosophe" (quoted by Champfleury, Souvenirs des Funambules [Paris: Lévy, 1859], p. 62).

Baudelaire's account of Fancioulle's acting, epitomized by the three key words: "muets," "symboliquement" and "mystère" seem to echo those of Gautier: "silence éloquent," "symboles" and "mystères." One wonders if Antonin Artaud (Le Théâtre et son double [Paris: Gallimard, 1964]) took into account these early theories on the hypersuggestivity of pantomime.

[70] J. Starobinski, op. cit., p. 409.

[71] Adam's (op. cit.) rendering of this line differs somewhat from that of Le Dantec (op. cit.), which in turn differs from the Crépet-Blin edition (Les Fleurs du mal [Paris: Corti, 1968]). These versions are, respectively: (a) "Tes anges, tes bouffons neufs aux vieilles défroques/Anges revêtus d'or, de pourpre et d'hyacinthe. . ."; (b) "Tes anges, tes bouffons neufs aux vieilles défroques. . ./Anges revêtus d'or, de pourpre et d'hyacinthe. . ."; (c) "Tes sages, tes bouffons neufs aux vieilles défroques,/Anges revêtus d'or, de pourpre et d'hyacinthe. . . ."

Whilst the rendering "sages" is that found in the Crépet text which follows the Oeuvres posthumes published in 1887, all previous texts contain the word "anges." The Crépet rendering would, I think, reinforce my interpretation concerning the sacerdotal mission of the artist. The major problem, however, in these textual discrepancies is whether one can make the apposition between "sages," "bouffons" and "anges."

N'est-ce pas une singulière ambition
à un écrivain profondément morose,
que paraissent ulcérer d'incurables
douleurs, que de se jouer avec une
marotte?

Nodier[1]

CHAPITRE III

THE ARTIST-JONGLEUR AS ROMANTIC IRONIST, OR THE GAME OF LUDIC LUCIDITY

Given the fact that the salient characteristics of the bouffon as expounded by Chevalier and Gheerbrant,[2] in their Dictionnaire des symboles, are so germane to the arguments in this chapter, I feel it necessary to quote in extenso their excellent definition. It is for this reason that I prefer their definition to those offered by Bescherelle[3] or Pougin,[4] even though the latter would be more contemporaneous:

> Dans quelques textes irlandais, le bouffon est l'équivalent du druide, avec lequel son nom est d'ailleurs, en Irlandais, en relation homonymique (drui, gén. druide et druth, gén. druith bouffon). Il ne s'agit évidemment que d'une parodie.
>
> Oui, mais une parodie très significative, une parodie de la personne, du moi, révélatrice de la dualité de chaque être et de sa propre face bouffonne. Dans la compagnie des rois, dans les cortèges triomphaux, dans les drames de la comédie, le personnage du bouffon est toujours là. Il est l'autre face de la réalité, celle que la situation acquise fait oublier et qui se rappelle à l'attention. L'une des caractéristiques du bouffon est d'exprimer d'un ton grave des choses anodines et d'un ton de plaisanterie les choses les plus graves. Il incarne la conscience ironique. S'il se montre obéissant, c'est en ridiculisant l'autorité, par un excès d'empressement. S'il vous rappelle vos travers et vos fautes, c'est en s'inclinant obséquieusement. Au-delà de ses apparences comiques, on perçoit la conscience déchirée. Bien compris et assumé comme un double de soi-même, il est un facteur de progrès et d'équilibre, surtout quand il désarçonne, car il oblige à chercher l'harmonie intérieure à un niveau d'intégration supérieur. Il n'est pas simplement un personnage comique, il est l'expression de la multiplicité intime de la personne et de ses discordances cachées.

> Parfois le bouffon est condamné à mort, pour lèse-majesté ou lèse-société, exécuté, sacrifié; ou bien il sert de bouc émissaire. L'histoire, en effet, nous le montre associé à la victime dans des rites sacrificiels. C'est l'indice d'une faiblesse morale, d'une involution spirituelle, chez le bourreau. La société ou la personne n'est pas capable de s'assumer totalement: elle immole en victime la partie gênante d'elle-même.
>
> Certains phénomènes racistes sont à cet égard caractéristiques, qu'il s'agisse de noirs, de jaunes, de blancs, de peaux-rouges, de Juifs. On tend à travestir en bouffons les membres de la race opprimée et l'on ne s'aperçoit pas que c'est une part de soi-même que l'on renie, en essayant de rejeter l'autre. Car le premier mouvement devant le bouffon, c'est de s'en désolidariser. Mais il ne s'élimine pas par la violence, ni par un ridicule accru. Tout ce qu'il représente doit être intégré dans un ordre nouveau, plus compréhensif, plus humain. Le bouffon rejeté ou condamné symbolise un arrêt dans l'évolution ascendante.[5]

The central traits used in this definition of the bouffon are, in fact, the essential characteristics pertaining to the Romantic artist. Firstly, the element of parody strongly evident in the use of this symbol by the Romantic artist as a caricatural self-portrait represents the demythologization or desacralization of the Romantic poet. The function of the bouffon undoubtedly resembles that of the clown who, as Hoerr-Charles explains, "serves everywhere as a high-priest of the psychological ritual, reinducting the earthly, neglected functions."[6] The essential bringing to a conscious level of certain basic repressions, almost in a ceremony of exorcism, is what the Romantic Poet experiences after the fashion of the celebrated Augenspiegel or the self-reflecting bouffon of Holbein's cartoon (Ein Narr, der seine Kasperlfiguren zu bewundern scheint), who gazes fixedly at his alter ego in the form of his marotte. Secondly, the ironic function of the bouffon as witty exponent of the other side or underside of reality translates the frustrated transcendentalism of the Romantic Poet, and indeed of literature itself in its attempted fictionalization of truth, whilst, paradoxically and simultaneously, asserting its veracity. It will be remembered that this symbol was adopted by the French Romantics, and expressed, along with other symbols of ambiguity such as the mirror, the double and the mask, the fundamental irony at the heart of Romanticism.[7] Thirdly, the pariahdom of the bouffon represents the ostracism of the Romantic Poet, both from the social (as we have already observed) and aesthetic points of view. The latter is the subject of this chapter.

The divided social awareness of the Romantic artist is paralleled by a dichotomous aesthetic principle: the social pariahdom of the artist goes hand in hand with an aesthetic pariahdom. Baudelaire, ironically aware of the failures of art and artist, transcribes this experience into what may be termed the symbol of the Icarian bouffon who represents a self-parody of the artist. This position will be seen to be an extension of Romantic irony, with its funambulesque emphasis on what Baudelaire aptly sums up, in De l'essence du rire, as "le dualisme chronique" (P., 992), and, more importantly, with its emphasis on the lucid and ludic nature of creative consciousness in its perpetual badinage with self and world. It is an ingenious synthesis of what Starobinski terms the "fiabesque" and the "réflexive."[8]

In questioning the fabric of the world--the comédie humaine--the Romantic ironist is, of necessity, confronted with the fundamental irony of artistic expression, that is to say, the fictitious nature of art, or, more appropriately, the artifice that is art. Baudelaire's awareness of the beautiful "lies" of art will be evidenced by the positing of the fiction by the poet, with the paradoxical denunciation of the poetic act itself. The fictitious nature of the poetic universe is coupled with the failure of the poetic vision; the delicate equilibrium between the finite and the infinite practised by the artist-_funambule_ proves illusory on account of the hyperlucidity of the artist. This is what F. Schlegel, in a remark most pertinent to this study, describes as "eine wirklich transzendentale Buffonerie,"[9] and what Solger neatly defines as the ironic reciprocity of "enthousiasme" and "ironie."[10] In _Fusées_. Baudelaire notes the following:

> Deux qualités littéraires fondamentales: surnaturalisme et ironie. (P., 1256)

The ironic dialectic inherent in the attempted transcendental synthesis also lies at the very heart of poetic language, which requires a perpetual _dépassement_, a perpetual violation of the basic meaning of language in order to be. The ludic nature of language will be seen to lie (in both senses of the word) in the fact that, to borrow Sartrian terminology, it is what it is not, and is not what it is, for the costumed artifice of language, and especially poetic language, of necessity transcends itself, whether on the syntagmatic or paradigmatic level. This positive negation (or negative affirmation, depending on the perspective) constitutes the ironic nature of poetic language. In a letter to Poulet-Malassis of 20 April 1860, Baudelaire notes the following:

> Et, cependant, j'avais voulu, par cette violation du langage, faire comprendre quelque chose. . . . Il ne faut pas taquiner les habitudes de l'esprit public.
> (_Corr_., II, 26)

It is precisely this "violation" which calls into question the essential being of language: it is the incessant equilibrium between the automatic nature of the word already charged with its own pre-history, and its liberation through poetic expression, that constitutes this violation, which may be considered as a type of creative destruction. "My language," writes Kraus in this connection, "is the universal whore whom I have to make into a virgin."[11] This piece is quoted by Auden in an article entitled "Writing"; Auden continues:

> It is both the glory and the shame of poetry that its medium is not its private property, that a poet cannot invent his words and that words are products, not of nature but of human society which uses them for a thousand different purposes. In modern societies where language is continually being debased and reduced to nonspeech, the poet is in constant danger of having his ear corrupted, a danger to which the painter and the composer, whose media are their private property, are not exposed. On the other hand he is more protected than they from another modern peril, that of solipsist subjectivity; however esoteric a poem may be, the fact that all its words have meanings which can be looked up in a dictionary makes it testify to the existence of other people. . . . A purely private verbal world is not possible.[12]

Moreover, the aforementioned aesthetic failures are over-shadowed by the demythologization of the Poet, that is to say the deflation of the lofty but false religiosity of the Romantic myth of the Poet in his attempt at self-canonization. A close analysis of Baudelaire's long-neglected prose poem "Perte d'auréole" will convey the poet's response to the transcendent vocation of the Romantic Poet, his spurious *désir de monter en grade*, his suspect spirituality, as implied in the overly sententious "Bénédiction." The profanation of the Romantic halo becomes the precondition of a new artistic direction: uncluttered by the dead weight of his traditional paraphernalia, the poet (with a small "p"), who has made tabula rasa of all venerable notions and beliefs, is now in a position to extract quintessences of a very different nature from those which, as the "buveur de quintessences" (P., 299), he used to sip. The celestial diet of the ambrosia-eater of Romantic myth has been substituted by more mundane fare: the demythologized poet now finds his vocation in the encompassing modernity that converges on him. The mage has, in fact, turned rag-picker, a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles; like the chiffonnier, the modern poet must scavenge off the city and make finds in its neglected corners:

> Descendons un peu plus bas. Contemplons un des ces êtres mystérieux, vivant pour ainsi dire des déjections des grandes villes; car il y a de singuliers métiers. Le nombre en est immense. J'ai quelquefois pensé avec terreur qu'il y avait des métiers qui ne comportaient aucune joie, des métiers sans plaisir, des fatigues sans soulagement, des douleurs sans compensation. Je me trompais. Voici un homme chargé de ramasser les débris d'une journée de la capitale. Tout ce que la grande cité a rejeté, tout ce qu'elle a perdu, tout ce qu'elle a dédaigné, tout ce qu'elle a brisé, il le catalogue, il le collectionne. Il compulse les archives de la débauche, le capharnaüm des rebuts. Il fait un triage, un choix intelligent; il ramasse, comme un avare un trésor, les ordures qui, remâchées par la divinité de l'Industrie, deviendront des objets d'utilité ou de jouissance. . . . Il arrive hochant la tête et butant sur les pavés, comme les jeunes poètes qui passent toutes leurs journées à errer et à chercher des rimes. (P., 327)

A degradation of a similar nature may be found in La Fanfarlo in the decadent (in its etymological sense) idealism of the Romantic Samuel who has, like Lucien de Rubempré and those other parvenus of the nineteenth-century literary scene, prostituted his talents in journalism. It is important, at this point, to note the transcendent implications in the given name of the protagonist (i.e., Samuel--his name is god), as well as in both parts of the pseudonym of the youthful artist (i.e., Manuela[13] = god with us; Monte/verde too indicates a type of transcendentalism). Also, it is not insignificant to stress the import of Samuel's patronym. The word *Krämer* in German signifies a retailer or shopkeeper. Hence, in the very name of the protagonist is implied the desecration of what is holy; Samuel, the chosen of the lord, or, in terms of Romantic mythology, the Poet, has become a *Krämer*, a seller of wares, a new type of "chiffonnier." The portrait of decadence is completed by the ironic, bantering, yet implicitly acerbic *ton railleur*: the ambivalent *clownerie* translates the impotent rage and subsequent self-irony of the artist *manqué*. The histrionic aspects of *La Fanfarlo*, where is portrayed the *parfait cabotin*, can be compared with the almost Rameauesque *badinage* of "Perte d'auréole," which may be considered as a kind of playlet.

Whilst the focus of this chapter is on aesthetic *bouffonnerie*, it might be interesting to see it, briefly, in the context of that much over-worked *thématique* in Baudelairian criticism: "l'échec de Baudelaire" considered from the existential point of view. In Sartre's[14] iconoclastic essay, Baudelaire is accused of having chosen to exist-for-himself-as-he-was-for-others, instead of striving to exist in the manner of an active and inventive liberty, which creates for itself its own values and priorities. It will be remembered that the theory of "autopunition" as related to the Oedipus complex had already been postulated by Laforgue[15] in 1931. These theoretical postulates are transcribed, in neo-positivist fashion, in Starkie's biography of the poet who "knew that he himself was considered a failure according to worldly standards--and even also according to his own."[16] Although dealing with the latter portion of Baudelaire's life, Mauron's[17] psychocritical study of the poet also emphasizes the degradation and impotence of both the "moi social" and the "moi créateur," the failure of the former precipitating the non-fulfilment of the latter. That Baudelaire's life was, from the existential point of view, a failure is incontestable, but, one wonders, to what extent can he be considered to have failed at being a failure, to what extent did his suffering give validity to his life, to what extent was his suffering, from the Christian standpoint, expiatory,[18] to what extent was his failure, paradoxically, a success?[19]

In his work entitled L'Ironie romantique: Spectacle et jeu de Mme de Staël à G. de Nerval, Bourgeois[20] defines one of the central and most problematic concepts of Romanticism: Romantic irony. The term, he explains, was coined by Friedrich Schlegel to describe what he considered to be the ideal relationship between the writer and his creation. According to Schlegel, Romantic irony consists of a successful synthesis of seemingly antithetical states of mind; the artist must be enthusiastically involved in his own creation, but simultaneously detached and self-critical, at once serious and playful. Neither fully committing nor dissociating himself, the artist gains an illusion of freedom from the limits of his art, self and world through the glorification of his ek-static consciousness, with its concomitant magnification of the self. The transcendental subjectivity of the hyperbolic self in its endless badinage with the world makes of the artist a sublime jongleur, subverting and surmounting, in his perpetual fictionalization or theatricalization of the world, the classical categories of the real and the ideal. Attempting a delicate equilibrium between the latter states, the artist-funambule becomes the sublime metteur en scène of the sublime fantasy that is the sublimated world. "Qu'importe," writes Baudelaire in "Les Fenêtres," "ce que peut être la réalité placée hors de moi, si elle m'a aidé à vivre, à sentir que je suis et ce que je suis?" (P., 288). In his preface to Les Jeunes-France, Gautier expresses thus the relationship of the hyperbolic and histrionic self to the world:

> Par suite de ma concentration dans mon ego, cette idée m'est venue, maintes fois, que j'étais seul au milieu de la création; que le ciel, les astres, la terre, les maisons, les forêts n'étaient que des décorations, des coulisses barbouillées à la brosse, que le mystérieux machiniste disposait autour de moi pour m'empêcher de voir les murs poudreux et pleins de toiles d'araignées de ce théâtre qu'on appelle le monde; que les hommes qui se meuvent autour de moi ne sont là que comme les confidents des tragédies, pour dire: Seigneur, et couper de quelques répliques mes interminables monologues.[21]

Whilst Baudelaire's perception of the theatricalization of the universe in "Le Couvercle," first published in Le Boulevard of 12 January 1862, may be considered from a metaphysical perspective, the heavens reflecting the "opéra bouffe" (P., 168) that is the world, the aesthetic implications of this statement may not be ignored. Like the gods, the artist has the power not only of creating an independent world, but also of playing with its inhabitants and being detached from his creation. As Joyce explains in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man:

> The artist, like the God of creation, remains within or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.[22]

Like the opéras bouffes of Baudelaire's day, with their satirical portrait of Olympus, the fictional universe conjured up by the artist records the transformation of sublime tragedy into comic opera. The dis-engaged artist satirizes his lofty pretensions by the analogy with the comic opus:

> En haut, le Ciel! ce mur de caveau qui l'étouffe,
> Plafond illuminé par un opéra bouffe
> Où chaque histrion foule un sol ensanglanté.
> (P., 168)[23]

In its quasi-negation of the external world, Romantic irony, a perpetual dialectic between self and world, posits the omnipotence of the hyperlucid and hyperbolic self. "L'ironie, sous sa forme romantique," writes Starobinski, "est donc devenue un acte réfléchi, un moment du devenir-soi de l'esprit. Cette intériorisation, pour précieuse qu'elle soit, s'accompagne d'une désinsertion qui n'est pas seulement celle du moi à l'égard de lui-même, mais celle de l'écrivain à l'égard du monde environnant. . . . Mais contrairement à la moquerie toujours pointée vers l'extérieur des ironistes du siècle des lumières,[24] l'ironie romantique tend . . . à devenir essentiellement un rapport à soi: elle est réflexion interne, conscience de l'infinie négation dont la conscience est capable dans l'exercice de sa liberté."[25] "La conscience du jeu" lies, indeed, in "la conscience du je" in its jonglerie with the internal and external worlds. The dialectic between the self reflexive stance of the hypertrophic self and the destructive (or creative, depending on the perspective) internalization of the external world constitutes the poetic jeu.[26] This fundamental dialectic of Romantic irony is expressed by Baudelaire in L'Art philosophique, dating from 1859, although published much later in L'Art romantique in 1868:

> Qu'est-ce que l'art pur suivant la conception moderne? C'est créer une magie suggestive contenant à la fois l'objet et le sujet, le monde extérieur à l'artiste et l'artiste lui-même. (P., 1099)

The enactment of the principle of Romantic irony is manifestly evident in that much misinterpreted poem "L'Héautontimorouménos," published in L'Artiste of 10 May 1857. The poem is more than a simple description of certain sado-masochistic impulses, or, more exactly, the perversity it describes is not to be understood as the accidental or occasional eruption of repressed desires; rather, it represents a more general, a more metaphysical condition which characterizes a certain stage of poetic consciousness. We have, here, a statement of the poetic principle of the divided (or multiplied, depending on the perspective) self,[27] at the heart of which lies the concept of irony:

> Ne suis-je pas un faux accord
> Dans la divine symphonie,
> Grâce à la vorace Ironie
> Qui me secoue et qui me mord?
> (P., 74)

The irony consists in a movement at once centripetal and centrifugal, whereby the self-reflexive stance of the poet ("Je suis de mon coeur le vampire"; "Je suis le sinistre miroir/Où la mégère se regarde!," P., 74) fuses with the internalization of the external world ("Je suis la plaie et le couteau!/Je suis le soufflet et la joue!," P., 74).

This interpretation would, of necessity, eliminate any distinction between the "te" of the poem as alter ego of the poet or the woman to whom the poem is dedicated--a favourite topos of commentators of this poem. However, the transcendental ego of the poet-encompassing-the-external-world merely mirrors the bitter incarceration of the poetic ego, entrapped in its own mental reverberations, frozen translucently, as in a crystal trap, in the frigid yet fecund isolation of the ever-expanding ego. The "vorace ironie" of "L'Héautontimoroumênos" has become the darkly luminous "phare ironique" of "L'Irrémédiable" (Irae me diable):

> Tête-à-tête sombre et limpide
> Qu'un coeur devenu son miroir!
> Puits de Vérité, clair et noir,
> Où tremble une étoile livide,
> Un phare ironique. . . .
> (P., 76. See Appendix B)

The principle of the hyperbolic and hyperlucid self, which constitutes the core of Romantic irony, could not be more clearly stated. It must be admitted, however, that Baudelaire's emphasis is somewhat more sombre in its exposition of the vertiginous maelstrom of immured consciousness. We are very far removed from the playful badinage of the aesthete-demiurge.

Romantic irony is essentially the irony of the fully conscious artist whose art is the ironic presentation of the ironic position of the fully conscious artist. The artist is in an ironic position for several reasons: in order to write he must be both creative and critical, subjective and objective, enthusiastic and lucid, emotional and rational, unconsciously inspired and consciously constructive;

his work purports to be about the world and yet is fiction: he feels an obligation to give a true or complete account of reality but knows this is impossible, reality being incomprehensibly vast, full of contradictions, and in a continual state of becoming, so that even an apparently "true" account would be immediately falsified in the very act of completion. The only position open for a "real" artist, then, remains to stand apart from his work, and yet at the same time to incorporate this awareness of his ironic position into the fabric of his fiction, thereby belittling his own work and his very métier in the wilful destruction of illusion, as he unmasks the imitative and artificial character of all literary creation in his parody of the facticity and fabrication of all art. The artist as fabricator is complemented by the artist as de-fabricator. Bourgeois explains thus the fragile equilibrium of the auto-destructive stance inherent within Romantic irony:

> . . . toute oeuvre s'affirme non parodique, mais auto-parodique. La parodie simple n'est ironique qu'au sens rhétorique du mot, parce qu'elle utilise la forme qu'elle conteste et dont elle veut se moquer. L'ironie romantique détermine un rapport plus complexe: l'oeuvre se parodie elle-même en utilisant une forme "sérieuse"--roman, conte ou théâtre--dont elle met en doute la valeur en soulignant son caractère arbitraire, mais qu'elle considère comme la seule possible. De là provient une tentation constante des romantiques à l'auto-destruction de l'oeuvre, par un mouvement subtil qui conduit non pas à la page blanche, mais à un maximum de ténuité auquel seuls parviennent quelques esprits particulièrement agiles.[28]

I should like to add, in parenthesis, the following example taken from von Grimmelshausen's picaresque novel entitled Simplicius Simplicissimus; the anecdote narrated by the naïve Simplicius amusingly illustrates the factitious, illusive and above all artful nature of artistic creation:

> Once when I reproached him [the secretary] for his dirty inkwell he answered that was the best thing in the whole office, for he could get out of it whatever he wanted--clothes or money; in fact he had fished a good many things out of it. I did not want to believe that such bulky and valuable goods could come out of such a tiny glass. But he asserted the spiritus papyri (that's what he called the ink) could do just that, and the inkwell was called a "well" because it was deep enough to hold everything. I asked how one could get them out, since the well wasn't wide enough to stick in two fingers at the same time. He replied he had an arm in his head that could do it. . . .[29]

The self-reflective stance of Baudelaire's poetry manifests itself in the poetic consciousness of the fictional nature of the Utopia of art. It is through his cleft consciousness that the poet posits a fiction which paradoxically denounces its own poetic act: poetry, as paraleipsis, is made to subvert its own utopian claims.[30] It will be remembered that the delicate hovering between truth and fiction is, in fact, one of the primary characteristics of the bouffon, who, on account of his precarious social position, is obliged to proffer the truth in masked fashion, for it must have the semblance of fiction in order to be tolerated. Indeed, one could claim that the art of the bouffon lies in a simultaneous positing and denial of the truth, in a fictionalization of the truth, whilst paradoxically asserting its veracity.

"Le Cygne," published in La Causerie of 22 January 1860, illustrates the essential illusion of the game of poetry. What Baudelaire presents in this poem is not the actual experience of crossing the Nouveau Carrousel and the reflections associated with this experience, but rather a reflective stance on these reflections which serves to negate the initial evocations. Hence the much repeated "je pense" ("Andromaque, je pense à vous!," P., 81; "Je pense à mon grand cygne," P., 82; "Je pense à la négresse," P., 83) and the insistence on the mental cogitations associated with the poet's memories ("Je ne vois qu'en esprit tout ce camp de baraques," P., 82; "Ainsi dans la forêt où mon esprit s'exile," P., 83). If the evocation of the actual experience is punctured by these references to the poet's cogitation, the literary nature of the memories also serves to deflate and distanciate the actual experience. It is not primarily the real experience which stirs the poet's memory, but rather a *souvenir littéraire*, the "Simoïs menteur" (P., 81). Crossing the *Nouveau Carrousel* is only the occasion for the image of the "Simoïs menteur" to arise and initiate the movement of the poem. The "Simoïs menteur" is, in fact, a perfect symbol for poetry; like the "Simoïs menteur" (the river created by Pyrrhus to console the grieving Andromaque by offering her a simulacrum of the past which she mourned), poetry attempts to recreate an absent splendour by creating a beautiful fiction.[31] Art is no more than an enchanting lie ("Ton mensonge m'enivre," "Le Masque," P., 23), the artist no more than a mendacious illusionist ("Mais ne suffit-il pas que tu sois l'apparence,/Pour réjouir un coeur qui fuit la vérité?," "L'Amour du mensonge," P., 95). "Lying," as Wilde pithily proclaims, "the telling of beautiful, untrue things, is the proper aim of art."[32] Indeed, the artist, as Baudelaire describes him in a letter to his mother of 30 December 1857, is "un homme dont la profession est de produire et d'habiller des fictions" (*Corr.*, I, 438).

A similar instance of the negative connotations of the reflective cogito is to be found in the prose poem entitled "Le Confiteor de l'artiste," published in La Presse of 26 August 1862. The lucid omnipotence of the hyperbo-ludic self in its reflective internalization of the exterior world is clearly stated:

> Solitude, silence, incomparable chasteté de l'azur! une petite voile frissonnante à l'horizon, et qui, par sa petitesse et son isolement imite mon irrémédiable existence, mélodie monotone de la houle, toutes ces choses pensent par moi, ou je pense par elles (car dans la grandeur de la rêverie, le moi se perd vite!); elles pensent, dis-je, mais musicalement et pittoresquement, sans arguties, sans syllogismes, sans déductions. (P., 232; the italics concerning mental reflection--in the fullest sense of the term--are mine.)

This passage bears comparison with Coleridge's statement on the imagination in his Biographia Literaria, where he defines it as "a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM."[33] However, to return to Baudelaire's prose poem, the subjective universality whereby the poet assimilates the outside world into his own consciousness, making of it a symbolic representation of his own mind, subverts the moment of infinite expansion into exasperation and, ultimately, defeat. Reduced drastically and vulgarly to the barest scheme, the prose poem can be subdivided into five stages: (1) the call of the infinite and the poet's privileged perception; (2) the plunge into volupté--the paradoxical centrifugal-centripetal force through which the poet both loses and recovers his expansive ego; (3) the sudden pain at the extreme limit of expansion due to the poet's agonizing hyperlucidity; (4) exasperation and revolt in the face of Nature's power (his exasperation with the limpidity of the sky must be seen to reflect his irritation with his own hyperconsciousness); (5) the dis-illusioned artist's confession of the heroic failure of art to embody, with any permanence, the illusion that is art.

Although Leakey[34] interprets the final statement ("L'étude du beau est un duel ou l'artiste crie de frayeur avant d'être vaincu," P., 232) as referring to the creative artist's struggle with the intractability or elusiveness of his material, I feel, on the contrary, that the "duel" is intrapsychic in nature, taking place on or within the levels of consciousness, and refers, rather, to the principle of dédoublement inherent in the notion of creativity whereby the hyperconscious artist becomes aware of his awareness as an impediment to the act of creation, even though necessary to it. The theoretical postulates of Baudelaire's prose poem are admirably summed up in Misrahi's perspicacious analysis of the essential dialectic between reflective and reflexive consciousness within the creative act:

> Seul, en effet, le pouvoir de dédoublement de la conscience permet de comprendre qu'elle puisse créer une oeuvre qui soit son propre reflet expressif: il faut à la fois, comme artiste, qu'elle se réfléchisse à elle-même et qu'ainsi elle se saisisse pour pouvoir s'exprimer dans l'oeuvre, mais il faut aussi, comme spectatrice, qu'elle se reconnaisse dans cette oeuvre tout en se distinguant d'elle; il faut donc qu'elle se "réfléchisse" dans l'oeuvre et y reconnaisse son ombre et son reflet: un double qui soit elle-même et qui ne soit pas elle. Tout le Musée imaginaire constitué par la culture esthétique universelle est un double mouvement de l'homme comme dualité.[35]

The tragic confession of the imperfect nature of art is, however, in some measure, a triumph inasmuch as the awareness of the artifice inherent in art allows of no masking of the fundamental problem: to confess that art is but a beautiful lie, is to preclude any false aesthetic pretensions. "Cette littérature," writes Bourgeois, "qui se moque d'elle-même se fait un honneur de cette imperfection. . . . Echecs, livres 'ratés,' catastrophes même, . . . telles sont bien les productions littéraires auxquelles conduit l'ironie romantique. . . . C'est le pénible cheminement d'une pensée presque héroïque à une époque vouée plus que toute autre aux opinions tranchées, aux sentiments violents, aux spéculations sérieuses et aux expressions emphatiques."[36] But despite the negative connotations associated with the Romantic ironist, the awareness of the illusory moments of illusion becomes in itself a source of ebullience and joy for the indefatigable artist-jongleur become the histrio par excellence. To quote, once again, from Bourgeois' fine (perhaps raffiné would be a better term) study:

> Le poète se fait . . . comédien; il prend le masque, et parfois la marotte, comme on entre en religion: il s'attribue ainsi le pouvoir souverain de "changer la vie" en changeant le sens de chaque scène que son imagination nous propose. C'est dans ce jeu seulement qu'il trouve la justification profonde d'un métier qu'il ne cesse de dénoncer comme faux. Il reste le maître de ses avatars: sa "persona" multipliée à loisir fait éclater le cadre rigide des règles, et il impose, dans une improvisation permanente digne de la "commedia dell'arte," sa libre fantaisie au lecteur moins prompt. Son ironie lui fait défaire ce qu'il fait, et sa poésie n'a jamais un caractère fixe et définitif. Il ne s'agit cependant en aucune façon de gratuité, et ce funambule qu'est l'ironiste n'est pas un baladin ordinaire. . . . Peu d'écrivains ont ainsi, dans ce haut dessein métaphysique, accepté de jouer avec eux-mêmes et avec leur art, avec leur lecteur et avec leur oeuvre.[37]

The poet, like the actor, juggles with fictionalized reality, thereby posing the fundamental problematics of art. This theme is not new: whether in Hamlet's fictional re-presentation of the truth for the benefit of Claudius, in Corneille's L'Illusion comique or Rotrou's Saint Genest where the identity of the person is revealed in the persona, the same dialectic appears in various modulations. The best example of this confusion of planes is, of course, Leoncavallo's opera I Pagliacci, where the fictional universe of Canio (already a fiction within a fiction) becomes the actual embodiment of reality. As with the repressed wretchedness of the hypo- and hyper-critical saltimbanque in "La Muse vénale," the misery of the mirth-maker cannot express itself. The human tragedy is masked by the fictional imperative. The show must go on. The pitiful situation of Hugo's Triboulet comes to mind at this point:

> . . . resté bouffon, cachant mon trouble intérieur,
> pleurant des pleurs de sang sous mon masque rieur.
> (Le Roi s'amuse, Act V, sc. i)

The irony lies in the fictionalization of truth and, concomitantly, the verification of fiction. Exemplified in this medley of disparate planes, is that serious clowning (or jocular gravity) which is the hallmark of the bouffon, whose very presence constitutes a perpetual questioning of reality, for the bouffon, with his sometimes stylish, sometimes grotesque pirouette, re-assembles reality so that it resembles truth. The bouffon, like the eiron of Greek comedy, is, indeed, the epitome of the artful dissembler, or rather, is it the artist who is the dissembling bouffon?

These examples can, in fact, be considered as a kind of art en abyme which calls into question, through its perpetual oscillation between fictionalized reality and real-ized fiction, what Leiris aptly terms the "vérisme"[38] of art. One is reminded, at this point, of Magritte's canvas entitled Human Condition I, where the painted landscape on the easel before the window seemingly fuses with the view through the glass. In its Romantic form, this exploration of reality is expressed in the dialectic between the lyricism of the Dionysian raptus and the self-reflective stance of Apollonian irony; "quand le poète renonce à transfigurer," writes Leiris, "c'est pour démystifier en procédant à une critique acerbe."[39]

In Les Contes de Champfleury, published in Le Corsaire-Satan of 18 January 1848, Baudelaire notes the following:

> Van Schaendel, père et fils: Peintres naturalistes enragés qui vous nourrissez de carottes pour mieux les dessiner, et vous habilleriez de plumes pour mieux peindre un perroquet, lisez et relisez ces hautes leçons empreintes d'une ironie allemande énorme. (P., 602)

Baudelaire is criticizing here the school of art which prescribes the assimilation or absorption of the artist by the sentiment portrayed, thus precluding any reflective stance on the part of the artist; he advocates, on the contrary, "l'ironie allemande," which implies not only the conscious reflection of the artist, but, moreover, the wilful distanciation of the latter from his work. "L'ironie naît," writes Bourgeois, "d'un désir impérieux de dépasser les contradictions de l'artiste, auquel les différentes 'écoles' imposent de sacrifier soit l'objet, soit le sujet, soit le monde, soit le moi. Ce n'est pas cependant la recherche d'une 'voie moyenne,' mais d'une position supérieure, qui permette de transcender cette apparente antinomie."[40]

Baudelaire's reference to "l'ironie allemande" can best be understood in the light of Friedrich Schlegel's definition of irony found in his "Romantische Fragmente." What is of paramount importance, here, is that the concept of irony is defined in terms of "ein wirklich transzendentale Buffonerie":

> Es gibt alte und moderne Gedichte, die durchgängig im Ganzen und überall den göttlichen Hauch der Ironie atmen. Es lebt in ihnen eine wirklich transzendentale Buffonerie. Im Innern die Stimmung, welche alles übersieht und sich überalles Bedingte unendlich erhebt, auch über die Kunst, Tugend oder Genialität; in Aussern, in der Ausführung die mimische Manier eines Gewöhnliche, guten, italienischen Buffo.[41]

The "Buffonerie," which may be taken as the central manifestation of Irony, has two constituent elements: first, and foremost, it is an attitude of mind,[42] a state of hyperconsciousness ("die Stimmung, welche alles übersieht"), which permits the artist to detach himself from the work of art as well as to transcend the creative self in what can only be described as a quasi-deification of the ego, so different from the unpretentiousness of irony in its Socratic form:

> Cette ironie, en vérité, n'est pas un humour au sens de Swift, de Sterne et de Voltaire, cette ironie est une ivresse de la subjectivité transcendentale. . . . Du Sujet de Kant au Moi de Fichte et de l'Imagination de Novalis au Génie de Frédéric Schlegel, l'esprit ne cesse de se gonfler, de s'enivrer, pour ainsi dire, de lui-même; créateur de son objet, il le détermine dans son être, et non plus seulement dans son ordre ou dans son sens. . . . Ainsi, au lieu que la sagesse socratique se défie et de la connaissance de soi et de la connaissance du monde, et aboutit au savoir de sa propre ignorance, l'ironie romantique n'exténue le monde que pour se prendre elle-même plus au sérieux. . . . L'univers est un conte de la sublime fantaisie. L'ironie est pouvoir de jouer, de voler dans les airs, de jongler avec les contenus--soit pour les nier, soit pour les recréer.[43]

The second constituent element of Schlegel's "Buffonerie" concerns the technical expertise required of the artist, his ability to transcribe the fusion of his ego and the external world into the work of art, along with his deliberate distanciation from the latter. Like the Italian "Buffo,"[44] with his miserable mimicry, his vulgar aping of human sentiments, the artist too, as we shall observe in "La Mort des artistes," realizes that he can but offer a pathetic caricature of his actual sentiments. Also, the mimicry of the "Buffo," as a member of the *commedia dell'arte*, must be understood in terms of the artificiality of the latter's performance which comprises a kind of *mélange* of pre-existing lines or scenarios. The ironic asides of the Italian "Buffo," the self-parodistic nature of his act, might also offer a further point of comparison with the self-reflective stance of the Romantic ironist.

Under the heading of *Auto-Idolatrie*, Baudelaire notes the following in *Fusées*:

> Deux qualités littéraires fondamentales: surnaturalisme et ironie.
>
> Coup d'oeil individuel, aspect dans lequel se tiennent les choses devant l'écrivain, puis *tournure d'esprit* satanique. Le surnaturel comprend la couleur générale et l'accent, c'est-à-dire intensité, sonorité, limpidité, vibrativité, profondeur et retentissement dans l'espace et dans le temps.
>
> Il y a des moments de l'existence où le temps et l'étendue sont plus profonds, et le sentiment de l'existence immensément augmenté. (P., 1256; the italics are mine.)

This passage should be read in conjunction with the following pronouncement by Baudelaire in his article on *Madame Bovary*, published in *L'Artiste* of 18 October 1857:

> Il m'eût été facile de retrouver sous le tissu minutieux de *Madame Bovary*, les hautes facultés d'*ironie* et de *lyrisme* qui illuminent à outrance *La Tentation de saint Antoine*. (P., 656)

In the same article, Baudelaire further specifies, although somewhat indirectly, the relationship of these two faculties as concerns the author, who is portrayed, significantly, as a "montreur de marionnettes." Although the qualities of "calcul" and "rêverie" are imputed to the heroine, the fact that Baudelaire has previously equated the author with the protagonist leads one to assume that these characteristics apply, by extension, to the seemingly absent author:

> En somme, cette femme est vraiment grande, elle est surtout pitoyable, et malgré la dureté systématique de l'auteur, qui a fait tous ses efforts pour être absent de son oeuvre et pour jouer la fonction d'un montreur de marionnettes, toutes les femmes *intellectuelles* lui sauront gré d'avoir élevé la femelle à une si haute puissance, si loin de l'animal pur et si près de l'homme idéal, et de l'avoir fait participer à ce double caractère de *calcul* et de *rêverie* qui constitue l'être parfait. (P., 654; the first italics are Baudelaire's, the rest mine.)

If "surnaturalisme" may be defined in terms of "lyrisme" and "rêverie," then "ironie" must be understood as a state of mind ("tournure d'esprit"), and, more specifically, as referring to the cognitive powers of the mind ("calcul"). It is manifestly evident, from these passages that irony, which may be considered as synonymous with lucidity, stands separate from feeling, deflating and destroying it; hence the epithet "satanique." "Ironie" is thus the opposite of "surnaturalisme." It will be remembered that the rôle of the critical intelligence, of the will of the artist is of paramount importance to Baudelairian aesthetics, despite the author's pronouncements concerning the psychological determination of the work of art.[45] Baudelaire's insistence on the rational faculties of the artist must, of course, be seen in the light of the protest of the Art-for-Art's-sakers against the open emotionalism and rhetorical outpourings of the Romantics (what Baudelaire epigrammatically calls "l'Ecole mélancolico-farceuse," P., 630): it forms part of the general movement of mistrust of unleashed, spontaneous feeling. In this context, one must also consider the correlation between the "spéléologie intime"[46] of the Romantic artist and his probings into the mechanics of art, and to what extent the latter becomes, paradoxically, an end in itself.

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By "surnaturalisme," Baudelaire did not mean anything to do with the supernatural as the word is commonly used. He implied, rather, the use of objects in the material, the natural world, as symbols. The anathema of realist art was to be supplanted by a non-naturalistic, suggestive form of art. His explicit aim was to attain a hyper-reality whereby, to use the celebrated formula in which Baudelaire characterizes Delacroix, the infinite would be translated through the finite ("C'est l'infini dans le fini," P., 1053). This coincidentia oppositorum, this paradisiac rapture, is, according to Baudelaire, an exceptional state of grace. It is the aim of the artist to deliberately recreate these ek-static moments by the creation of symbols through which the "infini" will resonate, through which the absolute will be made incarnate. But, as Porter[47] explains, the worm of decay is ever-present in the privileged vision.

The heroic attempt of the artist-thaumaturge to conquer, via the "sorcellerie évocatoire" (P., 690) of poetry, the "profondeur de la vie" (P., 1257), appears to Blanchot as an "effort tragique"; it is forever "un mouvement de tension vers une totalité toujours inachevée."[48] Art proves an imposture. The absolute cannot be relativized. The megalomaniac mage proves to be, once again, but an impotent martyr.

The fundamental obstacle which precludes the continued raptus of the artist is, indeed, his own lucidity. The artist is, as Baudelaire confesses in "La Voix" (first published in La Revue Contemporaine of 28 February 1861) ". . . de [sa] clairvoyance extatique victime" (P., 153). Clairvoyance and ecstasy are, for Baudelaire, the two fundamental literary qualities. The ek-stasis corresponds to the "surnaturalisme," which Baudelaire further defines in the passage already quoted as an idiosyncratic synthesis, at once centrifugal and centripetal, of the external world by the enraptured artist. The euphoria is, however, punctured by the ironic "tournure d'esprit" or "clairvoyance" of the artist, become victim of his own lucidity--the "extatique victime" of his "clairvoyance extatique," as the syllepsis clearly indicates. What Baudelaire views as the impossible coincidence of "surnaturalisme" and "ironie" can be compared with Solger's analysis of art as the ironic dialectic between what he terms "enthousiasme et ironie,"[49] whereby the realization of the absolute is, in a moment of paraleipsis, in its very annihilation, affirmed by the hyperconscious artist. Realization, of necessity, precludes real-ization. Boucher, following Solger, describes thus the état d'âme, or rather état d'esprit, of the artist in the presence of his own thought processes:

> "Cet instant du passage, dans lequel nécessairement l'idée s'anéantit elle-même, est le siège véritable de l'art." Et la conscience de ce passage, la notion de ce qui s'y réalise et de ce qui s'y détruit, l'état de l'âme qui assiste à la naissance de son oeuvre, qui voit la magnificence du divin se mêler à l'indignité du réel et perçoit que cette union a tout à la fois, d'exaltant et de précaire, n'est autre que l'Ironie.[50]

What Baudelaire requires, too, is no less than a state of hyperlucid "supernaturalisme." It is what Poulet, in his analysis of the transmutation of the expansive "cercle heureux" into the constricted "cercle tragique,"[51] defines as the impossible symphysis of concentration and expansion:

> Il faut arriver à être à la fois concentré et expansif, concentré sans cesser d'être expansif, et expansif sans cesser d'être concentré. Bien plus, il faut qu'en s'accomplissant simultanément, ces deux mouvements se mêlent, qu'ils aient un terrain d'action commun, un espace commun, mais sans pourtant que cette communauté implique quelque restriction que ce soit dans l'exercice de leurs actions propres. Il faut, en d'autres termes, et si paradoxal que cela soit, que la diffusion de l'esprit puisse devenir une diffusion dirigée, et que la concentration puisse être, également et inversément, une concentration diffuse.[52]

The impossible coalescence of the artistic impulse with the artist's own lucidity, the ironic reciprocity of the non-conscious with the conscious, may be viewed in terms of a glorious defeat, as we shall see in "Une Mort héroïque." Boucher sums up as follows the paradoxical emotions inherent in the abortive potential of the creative act:

> . . . c'est précisément cette pénétration réciproque, cette absorption d'un contraire par son contraire, cette vision d'engloutissement, de victoire et de naufrage

> d'où résulte pour la conscience de l'artiste un mélange de joie et de mélancolie, un sentiment de force et d'impuissance, un besoin d'affirmation et un aveu de faiblesse.[53]

It is in this light that we must understand Baudelaire's definition of irony, in his article on Banville, as "cette vengeance du vaincu" (P., 740).

It must be realized, however, that consciousness itself does not constitute creativity per se. To quote Pirandello:

> Consciousness, in short, is not a creative power, but an inner mirror in which thought contemplates itself. One could say rather that consciousness is thought which sees itself watching over what it does spontaneously. As a rule, in the moment of artistic conception, reflection is hidden and remains, as it were, invisible: in the artist, reflection is almost a form of feeling.[54]

It is, ironically, in its destruction of the initial spontaneous impulse that consciousness may be considered to be creative. We witness here the passage from unconscious creation to creative consciousness, from unreflective to reflective art. Art which holds the mirror up to Nature can now also hold a mirror up to the mirror of art. It is no less than the coming-to-consciousness of literature itself.

Baudelaire dramatizes the problematics of the ironic consciousness in the following anecdote taken from the prose poem "Portrait des maîtresses," published in La Revue Nationale of 21 September 1857:

> L'histoire de mon amour ressemble à un interminable voyage sur une surface pure et polie comme un miroir, vertigineusement monotone, qui aurait réfléchi tous mes sentiments et mes gestes avec l'exactitude ironique de ma propre conscience, de sorte que je ne pouvais pas me permettre un geste ou un sentiment déraisonnable sans apercevoir immédiatement le reproche muet de mon inséparable spectre. (P., 296)

The juxtaposition of "vertigineusement" and "exactitude" admirably reflects the heroic efforts of the spiralling consciousness to grasp the object of consciousness; witness the quasi-oxymorons "vertigineusement monotone" and "l'exactitude ironique." This passage may be compared with Nietzsche's exposition of the ecstatic paroxysm of intoxication of the Dionysian experience, as opposed to the Appollonian experience, whereby the ek-stasis of reflexive consciousness shatters the primoridal unity and self-oblivion of the Dionysian state:

> Only insofar as the genius in the act of artistic creation coalesces with this primordial artist of the world, does he know anything of the eternal essence of art; for in this state he is, in a marvelous manner, like the weird image of the fairy tale which can turn its eyes at will and behold itself; he is at once subject and object, at once poet, actor and spectator.[55]

In Mon Coeur mis à nu, which dates from the period 1859-1866, Baudelaire notes the following:

> De la vaporisation et de la centralisation du Moi. Tout est là. (P., 1271)

Implied in this statement is the essential dialectic of Romantic irony: the artist experiences at one and the same time the abolition of consciousness in the moment of inspiration ("la vaporisation"), as well as the heightening of consciousness ("la centralisation") as it reflects not only the moment of inspiration, but also the very act of contemplation. To quote Sartre:

> L'attitude originelle de Baudelaire est celle d'un homme penché. Penché sur soi, comme Narcisse. Il n'y a point chez lui de conscience immédiate qui ne soit transpercé par un regard acéré. Pour nous autres, c'est assez de voir l'arbre ou la maison; tout absorbés à les contempler, nous nous oublions nous-mêmes. Baudelaire est l'homme qui ne s'oublie jamais. Il se regarde voir; il regarde pour se voir regarder.[56]

But the infinite reverberations of the hyperlucid self culminate in paradox: reflective consciousness can never coincide with reflexive consciousness. "L'introspection," as Blin indicates, "reste une impossible limite, puisque le regardant se sait regardé et, passionnément replié en soi, ne peut poser pour soi comme une chose de nature."[57] The artist can but attempt to synthesize the moment of hypoconsciousness ("la vaporisation") with the moment of hyperconsciousness. Indeed, one is led to the conclusion that the creative act implies the urge both to intensify and lose the conscious self in a movement of centrifugal-centrifusion.

* * *

The impossible synthesis of reflective and reflexive consciousness is paralleled by an equally impossible synthesis within language itself. Whilst meaning and form are mutually dependent, meaning is not identical with form, and, furthermore, in poetic diction, the matter is complicated by the fact that its medium is a system of signs which have only a secondary, referential substance. Indeed, this medium differs radically from that of the painter or sculptor whose primary material is more or less shapeless, nearly always meaningless matter, upon which he will imprint form and meaning.[58] For the poet, however, the primary material is a medium before he starts to fashion it; he must deal in an already current and largely defaced coinage. Not only is the poet denied the creative privilege of coining his own medium, but his medium lacks all corporeality, being, in fact, a secondary sign system. "L'objet littéraire," writes Sartre, "quoiqu'il se réalise _à travers_ le langage, n'est jamais donné _dans_ le langage."[59]

Poetic language cannot mimetically re-produce or re-present external reality. Rather, its representational value lies in the fact that it is a secondary sign system. The painter's tree is an image to the extent that representational painting, whatever other sense it may have, is mimetic; whereas when the poet writes "tree," he does not create an image in a mimetic sense, although indeed he may stimulate one in the mind of the reader. The poetic image is only one in a metaphorical sense. Actually, it is something that evokes an image, a sign pointing to a certain pre-established configuration in our cultural memory. The poetic image achieves its effect by denying its essence; it is a word, but it functions by making us aware of something other than it is, of what Baudelaire might call its "surnaturalisme."

In his attempt to release words in some measure from their bondage to traditional meaning, in his endeavour to tear words from their living matrix, so that, to borrow MacLeish's formula, they may not merely mean, but be, the poet, in ironic detachment, exploits the infinite ambiguities of the Word. Whilst respecting the sanctity of the Word, the poet must desecrate that sanctity in order to affirm it, for it is only when language loses its mechanical aspect that the true spirit of language is revealed. "The poet," writes Burckhardt, "as a fool must be a corrupter of words, a punster, rhymster, verbal trickster, for there is no other way to break the disgraceful bonds into which words have fallen."[60]

Zucker[61] explains that the clown is, indeed, the archetype of negative affirmation, positing the spiritual within man by its apparent negation. The clown is the "Widersacher," the counter-attorney against a myth which, at the same time, he affirms. This hypothesis would be affirmed by Caillois'[62] study on L'Homme et le sacré which illustrates the confusion between the sacred and the profane. Baudelaire himself, in a letter to Félicien Rops of 21 February 1866, notes the following, which could well be interpreted in terms of the quintessential art of the bouffon:

> Vous savez quelle importance j'attache à l'art badin et profond, au sérieux masqué de frivolité.
> (Corr., II, 616)

Irony thus lies at the heart of poetic diction, for poetry is based upon a dialectic which both affirms and negates the original données. As Sartre might say: language is what it is not, and is not what it is. It is, Blanchot explains, in a perpetual state of dépassement:

> Baudelaire, comme tous ceux pour qui la poésie prend un sens, sait qu'elle est une expérience qui tend à faire naître le sens de toutes les choses ensemble, de sorte qu'à partir de ce sens chaque chose se trouve changée, apparaissant telle qu'elle est, dans sa réalité propre et dans la réalité de l'ensemble, sans égard au fait que l'expérience qui évoque ce sens fait elle-même partie de ce qu'elle évoque et qu'elle ne peut y tendre qu'en se réduisant, en s'annulant le plus possible. D'où la contradiction dans laquelle elle se déchire, son impossibilité.[63]

Also, the power of negation within language poses for the poet a crucial problem: it denies the existence of something which, simply by mentioning, it affirms, almost creates. This is impossible with the plastic arts. Words are at once an overture and a reification, and the poetic medium, where the inter-relationship between the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic is, of necessity, heightened, is incessantly oscillating between fixity and fluidity. The word is--and what it is not is too--a type of inter-lude: not only is it between these two states, but this "interness" itself constitutes its essence, for its being lies precisely in its becoming. Rather, the inter-lude is, in fact, an intra-lude (*entre deux ludes* --> in the game). "Le Jeu," Rey affirms, "c'est le Sans-Nom,"[64] and it is this negative affirmation which calls into question the relationship between language used as a social convention (what Sartre terms its "ustensilité"),[65] and the dissociative function of poetic diction. For the relationship of the poet to language is, Sartre explains, essentially anarchical:

> Le poète est hors du langage, il voit les mots à l'envers, comme s'il n'appartenait pas à la condition humaine et que, venant vers les hommes, il rencontrât d'abord la parole comme une barrière. Au lieu de reconnaître d'abord les choses par leur nom, il semble qu'il ait d'abord un contact silencieux avec elles puis que, se retournant vers cette autre espèce de choses que sont pour lui les mots, les touchant, les tâtant, les palpant, il découvre en eux une petite luminosité propre et des affinités particulières avec la terre, le ciel et l'eau et toutes les choses créées. Faute de savoir s'en servir comme *signe* d'un aspect du monde, il voit dans le mot l'*image* d'un de ces aspects. Et l'image verbale qu'il choisit pour sa ressemblance avec le saule ou le frêne n'est pas nécessairement le mot que nous utilisons pour désigner les objets.[66]

This text should be read in conjunction with Baudelaire's statement, in a letter to Ancelle of 18 February 1866, on the "fantastic" nature of language:

> Qu'est-ce que c'est donc que la poésie *fantaisiste*? Je ne pourrai jamais le deviner. Je défie Deschanel de l'expliquer, comme je défie un journaliste ou un professeur quelconque *d'expliquer le sens d'un seul des mots dont il* se sert. --Il y a donc une poésie *fantaisiste*, et une une poésie *qui ne l'est pas*. (*Corr.*, II, 610)

It is precisely because it is the very nature of language to be "fantastic," that is to say, in a perpetual state of dépassement, and because poetry, more especially, implies so wilful a surpassing of conventional language, that it is nonsensical, according to Baudelaire, to speak of "la poésie fantaisiste." Perhaps the dialectic between conventional language and its poetic metamorphosis should, as Heidegger suggests, be expressed conversely, for "poetry proper is never merely a higher mode of everyday language. It is rather the reverse: everyday language is a forgotten and therefore used-up poem from which there hardly resounds a call any longer."[67]

The stylistic acrobatics of the poet-jongleur-thaumaturge, whose use (or rather misuse) of language is based upon a constructive deformation, a positive debasement of his very medium, is itself founded upon the ironic décalage at the heart of language. In the poem "Le Gouffre," first published in L'Artiste of 1 March 1862, Baudelaire expresses thus the essential vacuity of the Word:

> --Hélas! tout est abîme, --action, désir, rêve,
> Parole! (P., 172)

Although this poem is often interpreted in the light of the negativity and pessimism of the ailing and embittered Baudelaire, I feel that a more faithful exegesis of the work would be one which considers the positive ambiguity of the pregnant nothingness, especially as concerns the nature of language (witness the enjambement).

In his quest for the deus absconditus within language, the poet is a sacred fool. Indeed, all language is metaphorical[68] (in the etymological sense of the word): the Word itself is no more than a deceptive mask. In a fin de siècle work entitled Héros et pierrots, A. Giraud describes thus, after the fashion of Rimbaud's "Voyelles," the costumed artifice that is language:

L'Alphabet

Un alphabet bariolé,
Dont chaque lettre était un masque,
Fut l'abécédaire fantasque
Qu'en mon enfance j'épelai.

Très longtemps je me rappelai,
Mieux que mes sabres et mon casque,
Un alphabet bariolé
Dont chaque lettre était un masque.

Aujourd'hui mon coeur enjôlé,
Vibrant comme un tambour de basque,
Rêve un Arlequin bergamasque
Traçant d'un corps arc-en-ciellé
Un alphabet bariolé.[69]

Like the clown, whose function consists in the revitalization of everyday objects,[70] the poet, in his attempt to re-animate the word through the restoration of its mana, must endeavour to exploit the dissociative force within language so that the word, which in prose fades into a sign, yielding its original invocative power to the thing, may be transformed into something rich and strange. It is no longer a "beautiful foolery" with which "man dances over all things."[71] Rather, it is a sacred foolery of a very different nature.

Like the clown, the poet too is an artiste striving towards an exquisite exactitude. The sublime agony which characterizes the clown's performance, and hence, by implication, the poet's Herculean labours, is admirably captured in Delétang-Tardiff's all too brief "Fragments sur le mime, le clown et l'acteur":

> Pas de décors, pas de portants, pas de rideau, pas de fond, pas de rampe: un cercle, et nul espoir de laisser dans l'ombre la moindre défaillance momentanée; nul espoir d'échapper, le temps d'un éclair, aux milles regards, roué de mille flèches, nulle possibilité de se tourner à l'envers, à l'endroit, à droite, à gauche, puisque ces mots n'ont plus de sens; maître absolu d'un espace toujours prêt à le dévorer; incroyablement solitaire puisqu'il est vu de partout à la fois: voilà le clown.[72]

The clown symbolizes, beyond a doubt, the impossible quest for absolute perfection, and thus constitutes the objective correlative _par excellence_ of the artist _manqué_. The clown, as the etymology of the word would suggest, is no more than a clod. The clown, whether in the modern guise of the circus artist or the historical spectacle of the court jester, bespeaks, in the final analysis, the artist's bitter yet playful self-mockery of his own arrogant pretensions and the derisive denunciation of the preposterous imposture of the folly that is Art:

> We must rest from ourselves occasionally by contemplating and looking down upon ourselves, and by laughing or weeping _over_ ourselves from an artistic remoteness: we must discover the _hero_, and likewise the _fool_, that is hidden in our passion for knowledge; we must now and then be joyful in our folly, that we may continue to be joyful in our wisdom! And just because we are heavy and serious men in our ultimate depth, and are rather weights than men, there is nothing that does us so much good as the _fool's cap and bells_: we need them in presence of ourselves--we need all arrogant, soaring, dancing, mocking, childish and blessed Art, in order not to lose the _free dominion over things_ which our ideal demands of us.[73]

* * *

"To Baudelaire," writes Benjamin, "the lyric poet with a halo is antiquated."[74] In the prose piece "Perte d'auréole" (perte de rôle), Baudelaire registers the demythologization of the Poet in ironic tones calculated to deflate the lofty religiosity associated with the

Romantic myth of the Poet. The Poet's halo belongs to the whole myth of the Artist developed by nineteenth-century European Romanticism,[75] and it is this Romantic myth which is implicit in the initial surprise and condescension of the poet's interlocutor:

> Eh! quoi! vous ici, mon cher? Vous dans un mauvais lieu! vous, le buveur de quintessences! vous, le mangeur d'ambrosie! En vérité, il y a là de quoi me surprendre. (P., 299)

The ironic juxtaposition of the witty, slighly weary accents of elegant society with the "mauvais lieu" serves by way of introduction to the poet's self-irony as symbolized in the muddied halo (". . . mon auréole, dans un mouvement brusque, a glissé de ma tête dans la fange du macadam," ibid.).[76] The prose poem records the desacralization of the Poet's halo, the one-time badge of his station. The traditional sign of sanctity is gradually banalized, finally being reduced to the status of a trivial object. The joke implied by the interlocutor's suggestion that the Poet advertise his loss ("Vous devriez au moins faire afficher cette auréole, ou le faire réclamer par le commissaire," P., 300) illustrates the extent to which this divine emblem has been desecrated.

Indeed, the poet appears somewhat of a _jongleur_: renouncing what he has already lost, he makes of this renunciation a new and unexpected source of superiority. No longer the hapless victim of contingency shorn of any claim to respect, he manages to imply not only that he is prepared to accept his unexpected loss but, indeed, that he had more or less consciously desired it. Having stumbled and lost his halo, the poet turns _farceur_ and wants to see it become a banana skin on which other second-rate poets will, metaphorically, slip. The poet's folly consists in his ridiculing the bad poets who will pick up the halo, that is to say adopt the transcendent vocation of the lyric Poet; he forgets that he is laughing at the image of his former self. Indeed, the poet has become the dupe of his own extravagant pretensions.

Another ironic aspect of the prose poem lies in the dramatic quality of the piece, which may almost be considered as the music-hall patter between comedian and straight-man: the interlocutor, even though he may appear something of a wag, is allotted the rôle of the stooge. Within the economy of the dialogue it is the function of the questioner to ask the obvious, briefly, in order for the poet to put him right with a stylish pirouette. To borrow Valéry's[77] terminology, the questioner plods so that the poet may dance. The dramatic dialogue of the prose poem should, indeed, be contrasted with the terse narrative version of the same incident found in the Journaux intimes:

> Comme je traversais le boulevard et comme je mettais un peu de précipitation à éviter les voitures, mon auréole s'est détaché et est tombée dans la boue du macadam. J'eus heureusement le temps de la ramasser; mais cette idée malheureuse se glissa un instant après dans mon esprit, que c'était un mauvais présage; et dès lors l'idée n'a plus voulu me lâcher; elle ne m'a laissé aucun repos de toute la journée. (P., 1257)

The narrator of the Journaux intimes version remained restless, perturbed and alone with his forebodings; in the prose poem, however, the accident has become a nonchalantly related anecdote. In graduating from narrator to raconteur, the poet has succeeded in distancing himself from the disturbing experience: this is achieved with the cloak of irony, whereby the shock experience is in fact reduced merely to the status of a passing inconvenience.

The very style of the prose poem indicates the distanciation and "domestication" of the original shock. By way of preterition, the raconteur, in claiming that he adjudged it to be less disagreeable to lose his insignia than to break his bones, both acknowledges the facts and, yet, by the style of his acknowledgement, miraculously suspends them:

> . . . mon auréole, dans un mouvement brusque, a glissé de ma tête dans la fange du macadam. Je n'ai pas eu le courage de la ramasser. J'ai jugé moins désagréable de perdre mes insignes que de me faire rompre les os. Et puis, me suis-je dit, à quelque chose malheur est bon.
> (P., 299-300)

The instinctively hasty retreat of the Journaux intimes version is subtly transformed into a matter of considered judgment ("J'ai jugé"; "me suis-je dit"), and the tersely related episode of the former is now recounted in the manner of a stylish and leisurely arabesque (note the litotes "moins desagréable"). The deliberate mélange of discordant tonalities further emphasizes the irony.

Whilst "Perte d'auréole" renounces the transcendent vocation of the Romantic Poet, as implied in "Bénédiction" and what Baudelaire elsewhere describes as "l'absolue divinisation du poëte,"[78] it reveals, at the same time, a new poetic vocation. The loss of the halo is, in fact, the pre-condition of a new artistic direction. The loss of his insignia proves to be a notable gain in freedom, and the halo appears, retrospectively (although one wonders how much of this is a justification after the fact), to its loser as an encumbrance, its loss, in some measure, a happy release from the starched collar of the poetic status quo. Emancipated from angelic tedium, the former Ambrosia Eater, the now secularized artist, can blasphemously abandon himself to the accidental and profane things of this world ("Je puis maintenant me promener incognito, faire des actions basses, et me livrer à la crapule. . . . D'ailleurs la dignité m'ennuie," P., 300). In recognizing the loss of his halo as his liberation from convention, the poet adumbrates nothing less than the programme of modern art as Baudelaire understood it ("Arrière la muse académique!," P., 307). The demythologization of the Poet is, synonymously, his secularization.

Nosing his way everywhere like the dogs celebrated in "Les Bons Chiens" or the positively canine poet of "Le Soleil," unencumbered by the stultifying impediments of the traditionalist, the incognito poet is now in a position to discover and ennoble the encompassing modernity. Baudelaire expresses thus his modernist aesthetics in his Salon de 1845:

> Au vent qui soufflera demain nul ne tend l'oreille; et pourtant l'héroïsme de la vie moderne nous entoure et nous presse. --Nos sentiments vrais nous étouffent assez pour que nous les connaissions. --Ce ne sont ni les sujets ni les couleurs qui manquent aux épopées. Celui-là sera le peintre, le vrai peintre, qui saura arracher à la vie actuelle son côté épique, nous faire voir et comprendre, avec de la couleur ou du dessin, combien nous sommes grands et poétiques dans nos cravates et nos bottes vernies. Puissent les vrai chercheurs nous donner l'année prochaine cette joie singulière de célébrer l'avénement du neuf!
> (P., 866)

The "buveur de quintessences" now turns to quintessences of a very different nature. In the projected epilogue to the second edition of Les Fleurs du mal, the nature of the poetic enterprise is further defined:

> Car j'ai de chaque chose extrait la quintessence,
> Tu m'as donné ta boue et j'en ai fait de l'or.
> (P., 180)

By a typically ironic turn, the tarnished halo is complemented by the effulgent mud which now constitutes the new poetic slime. The Poet-saint has, in fact, turned rag-picker:

> On voit un chiffonnier qui vient, hochant la tête,
> Butant, et se cognant aux murs comme un poëte.
> (P., 101)[79]

Like his none-too-illustrious counterpart, the poet must scavenge off the city, making discoveries in neglected corners, re-animating those second-hand objects that have become his new poetic fare, restoring to the de-vitalized material world a sense of newness and rebirth. In short, the halo must be transferred from the Poet to the object: the poet's lost halo re-emerges in the "aura"[80] of the object. The secularization of the artist proves, ironically, the sacralization of the object in a new relativist aesthetics.

The theme of the secularization of the Romantic Poet is also found in the nouvelle of Baudelaire's youth, La Fanfarlo, which was written between 1845 and 1846, and published in Le Bulletin de la Société des Gens de Lettres of January 1847. The critique of Romanticism in La Fanfarlo is somewhat more complex than that of "Perte d'auréole" inasmuch as more than one type of Romanticism is involved. In the protagonist, Samuel Cramer, we find not only an ironic self-portrait ridiculing the author's own Romantic pretensions (witness, once again, the self-destructive mechanism inherent within the fictional structure of the work), but, in fact~~,~~ a critique of the decadent Romanticism of the *Bohème littéraire* of the *Quartier latin* around the period 1830-1840. At the time of writing this *nouvelle*, Baudelaire had already plunged into the bohemian life of the *Ecole Normande* at the *Pension Bailly*, and had also partaken of the more *mondaine* existence of the dandy-aesthete while at the Hôtel Pimodan. Hence the portrait of the *dandy débraillé* we find in Samuel:

> Autour de la personnalité de Cramer, . . . nous devinons les familiers de la pension Bailly et de l'hôtel Pimodan: Gustave Le Vavasseur et Ernest Prarond, Louis Ménard et Louis de la Gennevraye, Jules Boisson, Auguste Doyen, Anatole de Boulet, . . . tous les joyeux fous de l'Ecole Normande et les excentriques que furent Lassailly, Ourliac et Barbara. Cramer a bien des traits communs avec Trialph, le héros byronien de Lassailly. . . . Cramer et Trialph sont tous les deux, avec tant d'autres, l'image du Quartier Latin de 1830-1840, génération nourrie d'un romantisme déjà démodé qui n'a plus la sincérité lamartinienne ni l'éclat du premier Hugo.[81]

Suffering from that typical Romantic *malaise*, tormented self-analysis, Cramer renounces, with the declamatory tones of the histrion, the yoke of literary atavism which has given rise to the *outré* posturings of decadent Romanticism:

> Madame, plaignez-moi, ou plutôt plaignez-nous, car j'ai beaucoup de frères de ma sorte; c'est la haine de tous et de nous même qui nous a conduits vers ces mensonges. *C'est par désespoir de ne pouvoir être nobles et beaux suivant les moyens naturels que nous nous sommes si bizarrement fardé le visage*. Nous nous sommes tellement appliqués à sophistiquer notre coeur, nous avons tant abusé du microscope pour étudier les hideuses excroissances et les honteuses verrues dont il est couvert, et que nous grossissons à plaisir qu'il est impossible que nous parlions le langage des autres hommes. Ils vivent pour vivre, et nous, hélas! nous vivons pour savoir. . . . Nous avons altérés

> l'accent de la nature, nous avons extirpé une à une les pudeurs virginales dont était hérissé notre intérieur d'honnête homme. Nous avons psychologisé comme les fous, qui augmentent leur folie en s'efforçant de la comprendre. . . . Malheur, trois fois malheur aux pères infirmes qui nous ont faits rachitiques et mal venus, prédestinés que nous sommes à n'enfanter que des morts-nés! (P., 491-492; the italics are mine.)

The tortuous cerebrations of the artist-*héautontimorouménos* are once again evident. We have here, *in ovo*, the full-blown decadence of the *fin de siècle*. Indeed, this passage could almost have been taken from *A Rebours*.

It is significant, moreover, that the title of the youthful Samuel's album of poetry: *Les Orfraies*, the sea-hawks, means, metaphorically, the "shriekers," since "pousser des cris d'orfraie" is to shriek at the top of one's voice.[82] The extravagance of the decadent pose, with its neurotic quest for originality, may, as Guérin,[83] an acerbic critic of the sensationalism and impudent histrionics of the *fin de siècle* explains in his article aptly entitled "Les Prêtres et les pitres," be viewed in terms of literary acrobatics,[84] or rather what Guérin terms as literary "pitrerie." Adopting the declamatory tones of those writers whose ostentation he supposedly decries, Guérin writes:

> Quelle formidable indignation, mon Dieu! si nos bourgeois étaient initiés aux hontes de la réclame, aux saletés de l'intrigue, aux hideurs de la camaraderie; s'ils savaient comment se manigancent les collaborations, comment se tripote le succès, comment on force à coups de gueule, le public à regarder; si on leur enseignait les trucs, si on leur faisait toucher du doigt les ficelles et les doubles-fonds; s'ils voyaient clairement, s'ils voyaient de leurs yeux grands-ouverts la basse et répugnante pitrerie de ce tas d'impuissants scribes, faiseurs de romans, faiseurs de ballades, faiseurs de tours, gloires d'estaminets où l'on aboie des vers, triomphateurs de sous-sols où, chaque nuit, sont éructées les plus fétides littératures; faux inspirés, faux emballés, faux artistes, qui

> remplacent le talent par l'effronterie du geste, par le débraillé de l'attitude, par la pipe, par le jurement. . . .
>
> Il ne faut point généraliser. Aussi, me garderai-je de prétendre que le monde des lettres ne soit qu'une bruyante et ridicule cohue de Paillasses . . . moins soucieux de considération et de gloire que de cabrioler devant la foule. Plusieurs parmi les écrivains . . . valent par le caractère comme par le talent, et si, quelque jour . . . la Renommée vient à s'arrêter devant leurs oeuvres, ce ne seront point, croyez bien, les tonnerres de la grosse caisse qui l'auront attiré, les grimaces de Bobêche, le boniment sans vergogne, qui l'auront retenue.[83]

The adolescent dramatics and histrionic defiance of the decadent Romantic symbolized in Samuel Cramer ("Dans le monde actuel, ce genre de caractère est plus fréquent qu'on ne le pense," P., 486) are, however, outmoded. Samuel is presented as "le romantique Samuel, l'un des derniers romantiques que possède la France" (P., 503). Whilst Baudelaire denounces the ridiculously exaggerated heritage of the decadent Romantics, he supplants this, as will be the case with "Perte d'auréole," with a new form of Romanticism based upon modernity. This modernist ~~or populist ae~~sthetic is symbolized in the eponymous heroine, la Fanfarlo; it is for this very reason, and also because she comes to symbolize Art--both its transcendantalism and histrionism, that she lends her name to the work, despite the fact that she is not the protagonist. Her repertoire consists not of a classical ballet (the Fanfarlo contravenes the classical conventions of the dance by daring to walk rhythmically: "elle osait marcher en dansant," P., 503), but rather a popular pantomime after the manner of the commedia dell'arte; she is described, in fact, as "une bouffonnerie italienne" (P., 506). The populist aesthetic is present in the Romantic call of the fairground ("les corsages de saltimbanques," P., 503), as well as in the colourful or fanfaron (as her name would indicate) aspects of her nature, which, it must be admitted, bear some resemblance to the parfait cabotin himself:

> Jamais elle ne portait de ces insipides robes de gaze qui laissent tout voir et ne font rien deviner. Elle aimait les étoffes qui font du bruit, les jupes longues, craquantes, pailletées, ferblantées, qu'il faut soulever très haut d'un genou vigoureux, les corsages de saltimbanque. (P., 503)

The colourful spectacle of the Fanfarlo's performance could well be likened to the pantomimes-féeriques at the Funambules, which Baudelaire frequented precisely at the time of writing La Fanfarlo.[85]

Both the decadent Romanticism of Samuel and the modernist Romanticism of the Fanfarlo prove ultimately untenable. The adolescent exuberance of Samuel's "folies romantiques" (P., 485) is supplanted by the anathema of bourgeois conventionalism in the form of journalistic opportunism, or what Baudelaire, the aesthetic purist, would consider anti-art. Literature has become, for Samuel, a commercial enterprise; he has literally become a Krämer, a seller of wares, whose motto is, significantly, "Auri sacra fames!" (P., 512). The sacred has been defiled: the hallowed (or "haloed") Samuel--for despite the critique of decadent Romanticism, the integrity of the artist as concerns the autonomy of art is not questioned--has lost his halo to the modern market place governed by economic necessity:

> Pauvre chantre des Orfraies! Pauvre Manuela de Monteverde! --Il est tombé bien bas. J'ai appris récemment qu'il fondait un journal socialiste et voulait se mettre à la politique. --Intelligence malhonnête! (P., 512)

The author's disgust at the turncoat attitude of Samuel is conveyed in his apparently nonchalant but in fact deliberate refusal to mention the title of the fourth of Samuel's works ("un quatrième dont je ne veux pas me rappeler le titre," P., 512), despite the fact that its contents remain fresh in his mind ("Ce qu'il y a de plus épouvantable dans ce dernier, c'est qu'il est plein de verve, d'énergie et de curiosités," ibid.). What the author finds so repugnant is the tragic misapplication, much as in the case of Raphaël de Valentin, of the artist's vital energies. Somewhat like the hashish taker, Samuel, in his renunciation of autotelic art, has experienced "cette dépravation du sens de l'infini" (P., 349). Ironically, Baudelaire's stern, almost puritanical invective against those illicit seekers of paradise ("En effet, tout homme qui n'accepte pas les conditions de la vie, vend son âme," P., 384) fails, precisely, to take into consideration the contingencies of the real world and of hard economic necessity. Samuel, the artist of a post-maecenic era, would undoubtedly modify this moral sentence to read: "tout homme qui accepte les conditions de la vie, vend son âme." The contrapuntal reference to Chatterton (P., 506), impoverished but untainted by the pressures of economic necessity, as opposed to the impoverished integrity of "l'homme le plus faux" (ibid.), lavishly entertained in the Fanfarlo's sumptuous boudoir, undoubtedly conveys the depths of Samuel's degradation.

Idealism, as Samuel laments, cannot but end badly ("Il n'est pas de rêve, quelque idéal qu'il soit, qu'on ne retrouve avec un poupard glouton suspendu au sein," P., 493). This is precisely what happens to the Fanfarlo; the ethereal dancer has turned bourgeois matron ("Quant à elle, elle engraisse tous les jours; elle est devenue une beauté grasse, propre, lustrée et rusée, une espèce de lorette ministérielle. --Un de ces jours elle fera ses pâques et rendra le pain bénit à sa paroisse. . . . En attendant, elle apprend à faire des enfants; elle vient d'accoucher heureusement de deux jumeaux," P., 512). Idealism has been suppressed with a vengeance, as the ironic "heureusement" would seem to suggest.

The nouvelle thus represents the decadence or twilight of the Romantic era. To the rejection of the decadent and populist forms of Romanticism, one might add its manifestation in the historical mode, of which Walter Scott may be considered the examplar ("Oh! l'ennuyeux écrivain! --Un poudreux déterreur de chroniques! un fastidieux amas de descriptions de bric-à-brac, --un tas de vieilles choses et de défroques de tout genre," P., 489). The operative word here is "défroques," which applies not only to this specific manifestation of Romanticism but to a more general mood of disillusionment associated with the movement as a whole. Indeed, one might even subtitle the nouvelle after that sonnet found in Les Epaves (a title which is of itself significant in this context), "Le Coucher du soleil romantique," first published in Le Boulevard of 12 January 1862, although it would appear that certain parts of it were composed at a much earlier date. This sonnet might profitably be compared with the following aesthetic allegory pertaining to the degeneracy of Romanticism as expressed in La Fanfarlo:

> Nous ressemblons tous plus ou moins à un voyageur qui aurait parcouru un très grand pays, et regarderait chaque soir le soleil, qui jadis dorait superbement les agréments de la route, se coucher dans un horizon plat. Il s'assied avec résignation sur de sales collines couvertes de débris inconnus, et dit aux senteurs des bruyères qu'elles ont beau monter vers le ciel vide; aux graines rares et

> malheureuses, qu'elles ont beau germer dans un sol desséché; aux oiseaux qui croient leurs mariages bénis par quelqu'un, qu'ils ont tort de bâtir des nids dans une contrée balayée de vents froids et violents. Il reprend tristement sa route vers un désert qu'il sait semblable à celui qu'il vient de parcourir, escorté par un pâle fantôme qu'on nomme Raison, qui éclaire avec une pâle lanterne l'aridité de son chemin, et pour étancher la soif renaissante de passion qui le prend de temps en temps, lui verse le poison de l'ennui. (P., 493-494)

Lyricism has been ousted by the pale light of Reason, enthusiastic rapture dispelled by arid lucidity. The impasse of Romanticism is paralleled by the *impasse* of the egocentric consciousness turning inward upon itself, and incapable of breaking the iron bonds of self-containment.

The critique of Romanticism which emerges from this *nouvelle* is achieved, primarily, through the ironic mode of distanciation employed by the narrator. The ubiquitous presence of the *je-narrateur* throughout the work serves to puncture the fiction, thereby dissociating the author from the unwelcome embrace of his would-be *alter ego*:

> Cramer haïssait profondément, et il avait, selon moi, parfaitement raison, les grandes lignes droites en matière d'appartements et l'architecture importée dans le foyer domestique. Les vastes salles des vieux châteaux me font peur, et je plains les châtelaines. . . .
> (P., 508)
>
> Ce trait caractéristique, qui a été raconté par la Fanfarlo elle-même, un soir que ses camarades l'interrogeaient sur le commencement de sa liaison avec Samuel, ne m'a nullement étonné; j'ai bien reconnu en ceci l'auteur des *Orfraies*. Il aimera toujours le rouge et la céruse, le chrysocale et les oripeaux de toute sorte. (P., 509)

The ironic process of distanciation or irrealization implies necessarily a denunciation of what is posited: this is achieved through a deliberate awareness, on the part of the narrator, of the fictional nature of the oeuvre:

> Quelques lecteurs scrupuleux et amoureux de la vérité vraisemblable trouveront sans doute beaucoup à redire à cette histoire, où pourtant je n'ai eu d'autre besogne à faire que de changer les noms et d'accentuer les détails. (P., 500)

After the fashion of the eighteenth-century writers of mémoires, the narrator intervenes in the histoire in order to emphasize the veracity of his work. Ironically, it is this attempt to affirm the veracity of his fiction which accentuates its fictionality. Here, the narrator vacillates between fictionality ("histoire") and veracity (only the names have been changed). As a creator of fiction, he cannot present reality per se, but must re-present reality from a given perspective ("accentuer les détails"). The subsequent aesthetic synthesis can but offer an appearance and not a facsimile of reality ("la vérité vraisemblable").

The awareness, on the part of the narrator (who is in many respects a Narr) of the process of fictionalization removes, in some respects, the sting from the self-irony: the self-parody is, to a certain extent, distanced, thereby permitting the liberating laughter of the spectator rather than the bitter critique of the participant. It will be remembered that to provoke this liberating, dis-engaged laughter is one of the primary functions of the clown.[86] Barred from identifying with the protagonist, the ironic narrator comes to view his alter ego as no more than a histrio, enacting his being in his life-become-theatre. Hence the presentation of the histoire as a "drame douloureux" (P., 501) and a "marivaudage dramatique" (ibid.), and the protagonist as the parfait cabotin endowed with the most prodigious "faculté comédienne" (P., 487):

> . . . comédien par tempérament, --il jouait pour lui-même et à huis clos d'incomparables tragédies, ou, pour mieux dire, tragi-comédies. Se sentait-il effleuré et chatouillé par la gaîté, il fallait se le bien constater, et notre homme s'exerçait à rire aux éclats. Une larme lui germait-elle dans le coin de l'oeil à quelque souvenir, il allait à sa glace se regarder pleurer. (P., 486)

The distanciation in what may be looked upon almost as an expression of endearment ("notre homme") is, paradoxically, of an intimate nature. The author's fictional creation is at one and the same time both an extension of himself and yet not identical with his being; it is almost as if Samuel were some kind of a marionette, independent yet not unconstrained, irresistibly compelled to dance to the tune of his author's creative faculties. The fictional character cannot exist independently with no strings attached. The ironic distanciation required of the author presupposes, of necessity, the principle of the divided self.

An early poem by Baudelaire entitled "Tous imberbes alors," which was written around 1843-1844, presents the bouffon in the form of Triboulet, the historical figure who was the court jester of Louis XII and François I^{er}, and who was used by Hugo as the protagonist in Le Roi s'amuse. As in Hugo's play, the bouffon here symbolizes the Romantic defiance of classical conventions, whether in the form of innovative technique or modernity of subject matter:

> C'était dans ce vieux temps mémorable et marquant,
> Où forcés d'élargir le classique carcan,
> Les professeurs encor rebelles à vos rimes,
> Succombaient sous l'effort de nos folles escrimes
> Et laissaient l'écolier, triomphant et mutin,
> Faire à l'aise hurler Triboulet en latin.
> (P., 198)

These lines clearly indicate the Romantic rebellion against the technical restraints of classicism (the "classique carcan" versus the "folles escrimes") and its authoritarian conservatism ("les professeurs rebelles"). The synthetic and syncretic nature of the final line, where the sublime and the grotesque are juxtaposed, expresses that mingling of genres proscribed by classicism and which Hugo took to represent the complete truth of life. The adolescent and irreverent gesticulations of the unruly schoolboy symbolize that literary protestantism which sought to free itself from the shackles of traditionalism: witness the bohemian and *tapageuse* buffoonery of the decadent Romantics.

The *bouffon*, like the impish schoolboy, represents a challenge to the established order. The Old Régime, with its fixed literary canons, is a thing of the past. "An aristocracy," writes Graña, "looks upon society as a finished and permanently contrived reality whose ideas are attached to a scale of unchanging models and whose literature written under such sponsorship rests on concepts of craft guided by acknowledged canons of content and style. But the end of the traditional society not only changed the public character of the writer. It initiated a debate concerning the claims and duties of readers towards him and his own obligations and powers. It destroyed the customary sense of literary discipline and the character of literary art."[88] A subtitle for Baudelaire's poem might be "La Bataille d'Hernani revisited." A similar theme is to be found in the somewhat flippant occasional piece entitled "Un Cabaret folâtre," which terminates that little-known section of Baudelaire's poetry entitled *Bouffonneries*.

In Pauvre Belgique, the relativity of aesthetics is symbolized in a fairground allegory; the theoretical postulates of the former may be found in Baudelaire's study on Guys. The "jeune écrivain" in question is Mallarmé, and the work referred to is his prose poem "Le Phénomène futur":

> Un jeune écrivain a eu récemment une conception ingénieuse, mais non absolument juste. Le monde va finir. L'humanité est décrépite. Un Barnum de l'avenir montre aux hommes dégradés de son temps une belle femme des anciens âges artificiellement conservée. "Eh! quoi! disent-ils, l'humanité a pu être aussi belle que cela?" Je dis que cela n'est pas vrai. L'homme dégradé s'admirerait et appelerait [sic] la beauté laideur. (P., 1392)

The prose poem of Baudelaire's latter years, "Le Vieux Saltimbanque" suggests a Romantic twilight of the gods, the seeming aesthetic impasse confronting the Romantic artist. The saltimbanque, like the tragic figures of "Le Cygne," is presented as an exile, both on the material and, more importantly, the spiritual planes. His exile from the fairground represents more than his exclusion from the workaday world, for the fairground is given a special dimension by Baudelaire through the use of such expressions as "solennité" (P., 247) and "ces époques solonnelles" (ibid.). The merry-making of the populace on vacation must be contrasted with the spiritual vacuity of the exiled saltimbanque, in whose abdication may be seen the apparent hopelessness of the outmoded Romantic artist's situation. "Le Vieux Saltimbanque," writes Starobinski, "apparaît comme une figure pure d'échec: avec une sorte d'impudeur, il donne en spectacle la déchéance silencieuse, le tarissement de l'énergie et de la volonté, l'impuissance fatale"[89]:

> Il ne riait pas, le misérable! Il ne pleurait pas, il ne dansait pas, il ne gesticulait pas, il ne criait pas; il ne chantait aucune chanson, ni gaie, ni lamentable, il n'implorait pas. Il était muet et immobile. Il avait renoncé, il avait abdiqué. Sa destinée était faite.
> (P., 248)

Whilst, on the one hand, the saltimbanque represents the unheroic survival of the Romantic artist from the spiritual point of view ("Je viens de voir l'image du vieil homme de lettres qui a survécu à la génération dont il fut le brillant amuseur," P., 249), this very figure of abject failure comes, paradoxically, to symbolize a new aesthetic: the aesthetics of modernity (which may be considered as a kind of neo-Romanticism), which is founded upon the dialectics of beauty-out-of-ugliness, and the "solemnisation" of the everyday (". . . l'homme occupé de travaux spirituels [échappe] difficilement à l'influence de ce jubilé populaire," P. 247). The "évasionniste" form of Romanticism, as symbolized in the frenetic and explosive activity of the fairground, as well as the spiritual form of Romanticism, are substituted by Romanticism in its realist, and comparatively ignoble, form. The following plea by Janin for a popular form of theatre can be read in the context of Baudelaire's prose poem, and, indeed, encapsulates Baudelaire's modernist aesthetics:

> Tout ce qui est vieux, fêlé, édenté, malpropre et malsain au théâtre, est excellent pour le théâtre ignoble. . . . Le théâtre ignoble est la sentine où se rendent à bas prix toutes les impuretés de l'art. . . . Quel livre on ferait avec ces amours propres en paillettes, avec ces vices en linge sale, avec cet art nu et pelé, et qui a perdu jusqu'à son fard, qui ne tient plus![90]

It is precisely the impossibility of retaining the former veneer, or mask, the necessity of confronting the "nudity" of his situation, which is so aptly summed up in the pathetic spectacle of the "vieux saltimbanque." The latter comes to represent the positively undramatic and comparatively "naked" form of Baudelaire's modernist or realist aesthetics. Baudelaire's preoccupation with the symbolism of the fairground may be further substantiated by the following titles of projected prose poems: "Le Philosophe au carnaval" (P., 312), and "Aux philosophes, amateurs de bals masqués" (P., 313).

What is so terrible, in the final analysis, about this poignant figure's abdication and loss of will, is the fact that this act of abdication has not deadened his consciousness of loss:

> Il avait renoncé, il avait abdiqué. Sa destinée était faite.
> Mais quel regard profond, inoubliable, il promenait sur la foule et les lumières, dont le flot mouvant s'arrêtait à quelques pas de sa répulsive misère! (P., 248)

The "regard profond" of Baudelaire's "vieux saltimbanque" is none other than the ironic consciousness of the Romantic artist, the "presence of mind" (strangely absent and present, depending upon whether one takes this metaphorically or literally) of the conscious artist, which derives an aesthetic from the aesthetic impasse, and creates a work of art out of the apparent impossibility of creativity.

This ironic consciousness is made manifest in the presence of the narrator in the prose poem, who both identifies with the pathetic figure of the "vieux saltimbanque," and yet distances himself from the disturbing spectacle. The narrator is moved by the situation, and yet withdraws from it, as his incapacity to weep would indicate:

> Je sentis ma gorge serrée par la main terrible de l'hystérie, et il me sembla que mes regards étaient offusqués par ces larmes rebelles qui ne veulent pas tomber. (P., 248)

The sentiment is further distanced by the narrator's reflection ("il me semble") on his emotions. With the hand of hysteria gripping his throat, he yet manages to preserve his rôle as passive observer by allowing the crowd to carry him away before he has accomplished the act which would have associated him, however tenuously, more directly with the saltimbanque.

The refusal of the narrator, who is himself a poet figure, to succumb to complete emotional involvement is highly significant, for it constitutes a means of artistic self-preservation. By the use of the narrator who remains distanced from the scenes which he evokes, Baudelaire is, in effect, repudiating the application to himself of the images of weakness and failure which the clown figure embodies. It is important to remember, moreover, that it is the composing of the poem, the statement of the problem in poetic terms, which effectively separates the narrator and Baudelaire from the tragic failure described. Mauron, however, feels that this is "une dénégation qui échoue,"[91] for even if Baudelaire succeeds in projecting his personal anxieties onto fictitious beings ("Ruines! ma famille!," as he exclaims in "Les Petites Vieilles," P., 87), the very denial of any resemblance to these figures of failure requires an awareness, or rather a positing of what is being refuted. The exorcism is thus, of necessity, incomplete. Starobinski, on the other hand, views the symbolical application of this agonising image to the narrator, as a sublime form of identification:

> Le spectacle . . . s'intériorise, et le poème se parachève dans l'épiphanie d'une signification qui, en approfondissant le monde extérieur, annule l'extériorité de l'événement représenté.[92]

The identification of the narrator with the tragic figure is, in some measure, substantiated by the self-confessed humiliation of the narrator, which the latter ironically transposes onto the figure of the saltimbanque (". . . et dût la raison de ma timidité vous faire rire, j'avouerai que je craignais de l'humilier," P., 249). These lines should be read in conjunction with the following extract from Baudelaire's letter to Gervais Charpentier of 20 June 1863:

> J'ai passé ma vie entière à apprendre à construire des phrases, et je dis, sans crainte de faire rire, que ce que je livre à une imprimerie est parfaitement fini.
> (Corr., II, 307)

It is precisely because they are afraid of humiliation and disdain, that both Baudelaire and the narrator of the prose poem must affirm, in order to denounce, the ridicule they fear.

First published a year later than "Le Vieux Saltimbanque," that is in La Presse of 26 August 1862, the prose poem "Le Fou et la Vénus" again offers an image of the artist-as-clown, this time in the form of a jester, garishly attired in the traditional livery of cap and bells. The diptych structure of "Le Vieux Saltimbanque" is repeated here, but this time it is nature that is en fête, and the solitary creature who is contrasted with the universal jubilation is the fool, clearly presented as a figure of ridicule ("affublé d'un costume éclatant et ridicule, coiffé de cornes et de sonnettes," P., 237). He makes a grotesque figure as he crouches, in suppliant fashion, against a colossal statue of Venus, uttering to the goddess pitiful statements of self-effacement. But the goddess, like the impassive statue evoked in "La Beauté," remains implacable. If anything, Beauty has become more enigmatic and unyielding in the prose poem, for her eyes are no longer "de purs miroirs qui font toute chose plus belle" (P., 20), with which she fascinates her lovers; instead, they are expressionless eyes of marble, turned away with indifference from the supplications of the fool.

The exclusion of the buffoon is presented allegorically: the Dionysian communion with nature (presented as an extended sexual metaphor) is sharply contrasted with the statue of beauty with its marmoreal impassivity. Implied in the opposition between the natural scene, on the one hand, and the statue on the other, are two distinct aesthetic attitudes: the evocation of the park which opens the piece presents a manifestation of that "supernaturalistic" and expansive state which Baudelaire describes in the _Paradis artificiels_ and the _Journaux intimes_. This extraordinarily intensified existence represents the oneness of the Dionysian rapture. The second aesthetic attitude, in complete contradistinction with the former, is that implied in the exclusion of the fool, this anxious lover of beauty, by the marble statue, the unyielding symbol of Beauty. Precluded from the Dionysian communion, the artist-fool can but be a supplicant of Beauty, and not a participant. His "de profundis clamavi" is thus expressive of the ironic consciousness of the artist which proves the stumbling block to his communion with Art, that is to say, his attainment of the "supernatural" state of grace. It is important to note that the artist-fool is described as "un de ces bouffons _volontaires_" (P., 237; the italics are mine). The fool's plea to the goddess to take pity on his delirium ("Ah! Déesse!

ayez pitié de ma tristesse et de mon délire!," P., 237) is doubly ironic, for it is precisely his inability to achieve the delirium of the Dionysian rapture which constitutes his delirium. Condensed in these two divergent aesthetic attitudes is the celebrated formula of the Journaux intimes: "Deux qualités littéraires fondamentales: surnaturalisme et ironie" (P., 1256).

The violent contrast between the pathetic crouching figure of the buffoon and the colossal size of the statue, expresses not only a gross sense of inferiority on the part of the artist, but, more importantly, the artist's bitter and ironic self-mockery. The allegorical dwarfing of the artist expresses the enormous distance which separates the artist from the realization of his aspirations: the tragic failures of art, the impossible quest for unity, the fundamental obstinacy within language itself whereby it cannot be more than it is or truly embody its essence. Hence the silence of the fool, whose powers of communication are clearly internalized: the "regard profond, inoubliable" (P., 248) of the "vieux saltimbanque," suggestive of the triumph of the reflective over the expressive, reappears ~~in~~ the artist-fool ("ses yeux disent," P., 237).[93] The fantastic disequilibrium between these disparate states is summed up by Heidegger as follows:

> Thinking's saying would be stilled in its being only by becoming unable to say that which must remain unspoken.
>
> Such inability would bring thinking face to face with its matter.
>
> What is spoken is never, and in no language, what is said.
>
> That a-thinking is ever and suddenly—whose amazement could fathom it.[94]

The tragic impotence of the artist-as-clown is restated in "Spleen III," again via the image of the traditional jester. His agonizing ineffectualness undoubtedly resembles the profound humiliation of the "fou" in the latter prose poem:

> Du bouffon favori la grotesque ballade
> Ne distrait plus le front de ce cruel malade.
> (P., 70)

Between the conception of the work and its actualization, falls the shadow. These lines should be read in conjunction with the following passage taken from Baudelaire's preface to the Petits Poèmes en prose, where he confesses quite candidly the artist's lack of pretension concerning his own inadequacies vis-à-vis his craft:

> Sitôt que j'eus commencé le travail, je m'aperçus que non seulement je restais bien loin de mon mystérieux et brillant modèle, mais encore que je faisais quelque chose (si cela peut s'appeler quelque chose) de singulièrement différent, accident dont tout autre que moi s'enorgueillirait sans doute, mais qui ne peut qu'humilier profondément un esprit qui regarde comme le plus grand honneur du poëte d'accomplir juste ce qu'il a projeté de faire.
> (P., 230)

The fallacy with this argument is the presupposition that the artist's cognizance of the project actually coincides with the project itself--an argument which those proponents of the "intentional fallacy" would be quick to refute.

One might consider, in parenthesis, Ferlinghetti's depiction of the artist-as-clown in the form of the acrobat manqué or what he amusingly terms "a little charleychaplin man." Ferlinghetti's acrobat shows many similarities with "Spleen III" and "Le Fou et la Vénus," even if the sense of motion and activity in Ferlinghetti's poem contrasts sharply with the static nature of Baudelaire's suppliant fools:

Constantly risking absurdity
and death
whenever he performs
above the heads
of his audience
the poet like an acrobat
climbs on rime
to a high wire of his own making
and balancing on eyebeams
above a sea of faces
paces his way
to the other side of day
performing entrechats
and sleight-of-foot tricks
and other high theatrics
and all without mistaking
any thing
for what it may not be
For he's the super realist
who must perforce perceive
taut truth
before the taking of each stance or step
in his supposed advance
towards that still higher perch
where Beauty stands and waits
with gravity
to start her death-defying leap
And he
a little charleychaplin man
who may or may not catch
her fair eternal form
spreadeagled in the empty air
of existence.[95]

Inherent in the liberating ascension of the "supernaturalist" or the "superrealist" is an element of potential defeat: the artist-acrobat's enthusiastic "saut" may transform him into a defeated and undignified "sot."[96] The artist, as Sontag[97] explains, is the exemplary sufferer: the cult of suffering, we remember, is a legacy of the Christian tradition, as is the discovery of the self, and especially the suffering self, based on the Pauline and Augustinian tradition of introspection. Indeed, "Fools for Christ"[98] is the expression used by Paul to designate the Christians.

The tragic impotence of the artist-bouffon in "Spleen III" can also be understood from the point of view of the historical situation of the Romantic artist: it thus expresses the latter's attempt at re-orientation in a post-Romantic era. The "grotesque ballade" (P., 70) of the ineffectual buffoon translates the outrageous clowning of the decadent Romantics in their neurotic quest for originality. Dommergue[99] takes as axiomatic the physiological etiology of this phenomenon. However, I would tend to prefer Nin's psychological explanation, which gives due emphasis to the frustrated transcendentalism forming an integral part of the Romantic quest:

> Dr. Allendy said that it was necessary to become equal to life, that the romantic was defeated by life, really died of it, whether by tuberculosis in the old days, or by neurosis today. I had never thought before of the connection between neurosis and romanticism. Wanting the impossible? Dying when unable to reach it? Not wanting to compromise?[100]

The attitude of supplication in "Le Fou et la Vénus" may be compared with the opening lines of "La Mort des artistes":

> Combien faut-il de fois secouer mes grelots
> Et baiser ton front bas, morne caricature?
> (P., 120)

This poem finds its definitive form in the 1857 edition (with the exception of the third line), and, on account of its hermetic nature, should be compared with the original version which appeared in Le Messager de l'Assemblée of 1851; the latter, being more discursive in tone, is much more straightforward. Interpretations of this poem differ widely. Emmanuel[101] explicates this work in terms of the poet's sexual impotence and his caricature of a relationship with his mother. Of particular interest is the parallel he makes between "mater" and "matière," thus implying the caricatural deformation of matter by the artist. The metaphorical rather than the biographical implications of this statement deserve, I think, greater attention. Auerbach,[102] on the other hand, interprets the poem in the light of the artist's struggle for something absolute--a striving, warped by bitter hopelessness, for the Idea or archetype in the Platonic sense. He thus explicates the "morne caricature" (P., 120), before which the artist humiliates himself like a clown, in terms of the debased earthly appearence, the shadow, through which the poet attempts to penetrate in his quest for the mystic archetype. In more general terms, the theme of the poem is the creative sterility of the artist; foreshadowed here is Mallarmé's obsession with "le vide papier que la blancheur défend."[103]

Whilst I would agree with Auerbach's emphasis on the limits and inadequacies of art and the incapacities of the artist, I feel that it is of prime importance to accentuate the ironic stance underlying not only the act of artistic creation, but also the derisory outcome of the artist's endeavours. Take, for example, the image of the jester in the opening lines of the poem (its significance is all the greater, given the fact that "La Mort des artistes" was the terminal poem of the 1857 edition of Les Fleurs du mal). What is expressed in this telescopic image is the titanic combat of the artist with both matter and the self, which is likewise the theme of the prose poem "Le *Confiteor* de l'artiste." The "morne caricature" (P., 120) should not be taken to stand for Beauty or the Idea, but rather for language itself, that is to say language in its corporeality. The act of creation is thus constituted by the embracing of language as matter, or more specifically as unconscious matter which must be given life by the artist conscious of the internal structure of language ("nous démolirons mainte lourde armature") which is, at one and the same time, to be explored with the reverence of the mystic ("Pour piquer dans le but de mystique nature") and the arrogant contempt of the conscious artist for the vile en soi that is language in its corporeality.[104] Indeed, there is a constant opposition throughout the poem between the spirituality or consciousness of the artist, and the materiality or corporeality of the work of art ("la grande Créature"). The "subtils complots" on the part of the artist thus represent the artist's illumination of matter through poetic consciousness. Language, like the "grelots" of the opening lines, must be made to draw attention to itself as being more than its corporeality: the word must be made to ring with a new resonance. The Platonic interpretations of this poem cannot avoid the difficulty of the corporeal implications in "la grande Créature," which may be taken to symbolize language as primary matter, but matter spiritualized by the divine spark of artistic consciousness. The artist's desire is considered "infernal" and the artist "damné" because what he is attempting is nothing less than the transsubstantiation of matter.

The final tercets of the sonnet, whilst still dealing with the problems inherent in the creative act, have a somewhat different emphasis. Whereas the quatrains were concerned with the interrelationship between poetic consciousness and inert matter, the tercets are more concerned with consciousness as it relates to the artist himself. The artist's consciousness, instead of reflecting the external world, now turns inward to reflect the poet himself. The "sculpteurs" of external matter now turn the chisel of their art inwards upon themselves ("se martelant la poitrine et le front") as they themselves become their own poetic matter. The self-reflective stance of poetic consciousness is the ultimate response in answer to the impossible attempt to spiritualize matter ("Il en est qui jamais n'ont connu leur Idole"), and it too is a damnable affair, as self-reflective consciousness lacks the corporeality which might realize this endeavour. Hence the disgrace ("affront") which falls upon the artist who attempts to materialize the spiritual.

The final tercet expresses the third option open to the conscious artist: having witnessed the failures of consciousness reflecting external and internal matter respectively, the object of consciousness is now expanded to include both these options, for in the death of the self as either reflector or reflected, is born that synthetic consciousness which surpasses these arbitrary distinctions to encompass both self and world in one ecstatic embrace which will bring to fruition the mental images contained in the poet's mind. The theme of the poem is thus the agony of the artist in his duel with consciousness and matter: all this is summed up in the impotent rage of the artist-as-jester in the liminal image of this sonnet which subliminally penetrates the whole work: But, as Baudelaire remarks in the prose poem "Le Désir de peindre": "Malheureux peut être l'homme, mais heureux l'artiste que le désir déchire" (P., 288).

In a sketch for a work entitled Cauchemar, which dates from circa 1845, Baudelaire again expresses the inadequacies of the artist in the image of the artist as fou (this term must be understood in its full ambiguity)[105]:

> Le poète est devenu fou. La muse ne lui envoie plus
> que des rimes insensées... Malédiction! (P., 209)

In the prose poem "Une Mort héroïque," it is the genial buffoon of legend, Fancioulle, who represents the creative artist and embodies, along with that other satanic artist, the Prince, the Baudelairian aesthetic. It may, at first, appear somewhat incongruous that the historical and legendary setting of this prose poem should find a place in a work dedicated to "la vie moderne" (Préface à A. Houssaye, P., 229). However, inasmuch as the prose poem allegorically represents the modern artist, it is thoroughly in accordance with the tone of the whole work.

"Une Mort héroïque" illustrates not only the heroism of the artist, but, more importantly, the unheroic and tragic failures of both art and artist. Expressed in the allegory of this prose poem is the confrontation of two opposing aesthetic principles which, for Baudelaire, have in turn moral implications. On the one hand, embodied in the mime Fancioulle, is the creative act which results from a sustained creative effort; on the other, embodied in the malevolent Prince, is the destructive act which depends on the improvisation of a moment's inspiration. Ultimately, both culminate in defeat. At the close of the Poëme du Haschisch, Baudelaire clearly distinguishes between the poet who, "par l'exercice assidu de la volonté et la noblesse permanente de l'intention" (P., 387), has created a garden of beauty, and those who have, by diabolical means, sought to reach "d'un seul coup, à l'existence surnaturel" (ibid.).

The buffoon represents the former principle, that is to say the legitimate form of creativity; he stands for the positive, creative aspects of man's search for beauty and for the escape from his "habitacle de fange" (P., 348). Fancioulle is, for one short moment, a veritable incarnation of the ideal ("Ce bouffon allait, venait, riait, pleurait, se convulsait, avec une indéstructible auréole autour de la tête. . . . Fancioulle me prouvait, d'une manière péremptoire, irréfutable, que l'ivresse de l'art est plus apte que toute autre à voiler les terreurs du gouffre," P., 271). But Fancioulle's success proves ephemeral: his ecstatic convulsions take on a very different meaning on the existential plane. The affirmation of the supreme power of art proves not to be the triumphant assertion which it first appears. For when the Prince's page blows the whistle, Fancioulle's paroxysmal rapture is shattered and he falls dead. The "indestructible auréole" turns out to be, on the contrary, exceedingly fragile. Art cannot, ultimately, conceal the abyss. What is revealed, in the final analysis, is the Utopian nature of Art and the self-deception of those poets who practise this act of bad faith:

> . . . même s'il voile un instant "les terreurs du gouffre," même s'il se couronne d'une auréole apparemment "indestructible," l'art n'est pas une opération de salut. Il est tout au plus une sublime pantomime au bord de la tombe: mais la tombe ne se laisse pas longtemps oublier. Sur la crête où il surplombe l'abîme, l'artiste, en sa plus parfaite réussite, n'est qu'une apparition éphémère.[106]

Opposed to Fancioulle is another artist, the Prince, "amoureux passionné des beaux-arts" and "véritable artiste lui-même" (P., 270). If Fancioulle embodies the legitimate means of creativity, the Prince, on the other hand, must be numbered amongst those who seek to reach, "d'un seul coup," intense aesthetic and spiritual pleasure. Theirs is but a "paradis d'occasion" (P., 386). The Prince, whose aesthetic experimentation and refined perversity resemble that of Des Esseintes, thus embodies not the pure creative act, but the destructive act, elevating cruelty and perversity to one of the fine arts. The moment of supreme pleasure for the Prince lies in his creative destruction, when he triumphs over the vision of the creative artist. He too, as creative artist, becomes a new kind of Pierrot,[107] with his "pâleur nouvelle" (P., 272), as he creates around him his own personal theatre ("Le grand malheur de ce Prince fut qu'il n'eut jamais un théâtre assez vaste pour son génie," P., 270).

Whether one interprets the antagonism of the Prince towards his bouffon in a psychological light, as do Mauron[108] and Maurin,[109] who explain this in terms of the artist's struggle between the exigencies of his art and those of society, the conclusion that Baudelaire presents, through these two allegorical figures, constitutes a recognition of the ultimate and apparently inevitable defeat of the artist, on account of the ephemeral nature of art. Art can but provide an illusion of permanence, a fleeting moment of intoxication. The art of the Prince proves equally transient. His art systematically reduces the range of aesthetic experience or experiment open to him, since his aesthetic experiences are each unique, are not susceptible to prolonged contemplation, except perhaps in the memory, and involve the destruction of the elements which produced them. No other mime can replace Fancioulle, and the Prince cannot repeat the same analytical experiment ("Il voulait profiter de l'occasion pour faire une expérience physiologique d'un intérêt capital, et vérifier jusqu'à quel point les facultés habituelles d'un artiste pouvaient être altérées ou modifiées par la situation extraordinaire où il se trouvait," P., 270). Clinical experiment or enraptured flight, the aesthetics of evanescence is the same.

It is significant, moreover, that this aesthetic is conveyed through the art of the mime, which must surely be classed among the most ephemeral of the arts: the mime leaves nothing behind as a memorial (unless it be the memory of his performance). Even in ballet, the choreography endures; but in pantomime, for the most part, even the script of the scenario is of little or no interest as virtually everything depends on the individual qualities of the mime. The following extract from Mallarmé on the poetry of silence (which would appear to surpass the celebrated dictum of Pater on the affinities between art and music) comes to mind: its inspiration--Paul Margueritte's pantomime, Pierrot assassin de sa femme:

MIMIQUE

> Le silence, seul luxe après les rimes, un orchestre ne faisant avec son or, ses frôlements de pensée et de soir, qu'en détailler la signification à l'égal d'une ode tue et que c'est au poëte, suscité par un défi de traduire! le silence aux après-midi de musique; je le trouve avec contentement, aussi, devant la réapparition toujours inédite, de Pierrot ou du poignant et élégant mime Paul Margueritte.[110]

The art of the mime represents the idealization of art on quite a different score. Contrary to popular opinion, the art of mime has little to do with spontaneous improvisation (especially in pantomimes such as those that Baudelaire would have seen in the first half of the nineteenth century), but depends rather, after the manner of the _commedia_ scenarios, on a repertoire of gestures and developments, carefully prepared, rehearsed, modified, refined, and then applied to a stock range of situations. In fact, Baudelaire is explicit that Fancioulle was performing, for the occasion, one of his most famous roles (". . . Fancioulle devait jouer un de ses principaux et de ses meilleurs rôles," P., 270). What this represents from the point of view of Baudelairian aesthetics is that strange amalgam of child-like spontaneity and calculated craftsmanship that is required of the true artist. The natural antagonism between these two states is allegorically presented in the confrontation of the two artists: the blow struck by the Prince thus symbolizes the rude intrusion of the artist's consciousness into the Dionysian rapture of Fancioulle. The ultimate destruction of Fancioulle's "extravagantes bouffonneries," which, as Baudelaire explains, partake of the "divin" and the "surnaturel" (P., 271), illustrates, beyond a doubt, the impossibility of compromise.

The paradoxical _frénésie calculée_, which is the hallmark of the pantomime, indeed symbolizes the essential subterfuge which lies at the heart of the poetic experience, for the claims of poetry to embody the ideal or the _au-delà_ are, in fact, subverted by the very medium through which it is created: the subterfuge of poetry consists in the inevitable antagonism between the ludic and voluntary aspects of creation, and the spontaneous Utopia it attempts to approximate. Blanchot explains thus the negativity and destruction inherent in the attempted positing of the poetic ideal:

> L'exigence poétique se découvre toujours à lui [Baudelaire] comme exigence d'une parole réglée, ordonnée, travaillée, réfléchie, aussi lucide qu'il se peut, et le rêve pur n'arrive jamais à dissimuler à ses yeux le défaut qui le rend impossible, ni le leurre qu'il représente. . . . Qu'importe, dira le poète complaisant, si je me trompe moi-même avec cette fausse éternité qui n'est que l'oubli du temps (oubli qui n'est possible que dans le temps)? Oui, mais la condition poétique le veut: à peine commence la satisfaction que le coup commandant le réveil est frappé, et c'est la poésie elle-même qui frappe ce coup lourd, terrible, lequel révèle ce qu'est le rêve: hypocrisie, néant.[111]

It is what Banville terms "l'attrait du gouffre d'en haut."[112]

It is not fortuitous that Baudelaire chooses to present the dialectic of artistic creation in histrionic terms for, like the artist *dédoublé*, the actor requires both a sense of unity with the personage portrayed, as well as a critical sense of distanciation from his rôle:

> Quand on dit d'un comédien: "Voilà un bon comédien," on se sert d'une formule qui implique que sous le personnage se laisse encore deviner le comédien, c'est-à-dire l'art, l'effort, la volonté. (P., 271)

It is precisely because Fancioulle achieves an absolute oneness with his rôle, thereby failing to maintain the critical objectivity required of the "bon comédien," that he is symbolically dispatched. The abolition of consciousness is an impossible ideal. It is in this sense that we must understand the apparent contradiction in the presentation of Fancioulle, for he is at one and the same time a "parfaite idéalisation" (P., 271) and the opposite of the "bon comédien." Chambers,[113] in his analysis of the prose poem in terms of the tragic disintoxication of the artist who cannot maintain his *ilinx*, that is to say, who cannot assure permanent possession of his rôle, fails to comprehend that Fancioulle's performance represents an absolute, and one which cannot be relativized; it cannot be modified, only terminated. Hence the symbolic death of the artist.

The disintoxication due to the artist's ironic consciousness is manifest in the prose poem in the presence of the ironic narrator, whom Starobinski defines ~~as~~ "la conscience supérieure, grâce à laquelle le spectacle reçoit sa dimension de surnaturalisme et d'ironie."[114] The narrator's emotional involvement with both the Prince and the *bouffon*, expressed in the form of the *je-narrateur*, is of an intimate nature:

> Mais pour ceux qui, comme moi, avaient pu pénétrer plus avant dans les profondeurs de cette âme curieuse et malade. . . . (P., 270)
>
> Ce bouffon allait, venait, riait, pleurait, se convulsait, avec une indestructible auréole autour de la tête, auréole invisible pour tous, mais visible pour moi, et où se mêlaient, dans un étrange amalgame, les rayons de l'Art et la gloire du Martyre. (P., 271)

However, as with the impossible *ilinx*, the emotion is at one and the same time affirmed, and then negated by the narrator's deliberate emphasis on the act of writing:

> Ma plume tremble, et des larmes d'une émotion toujours présente me montent aux yeux pendant que je cherche à vous décrire cette inoubliable soirée. (P., 271)

The ironic presence of the narrator ("un oeil clairvoyant," P., 272) in the prose poem translates the deception and pretence at the heart of the poetic act. Like the actor who tries to achieve communion with his rôle and be possessed by it, the poet seeks to impersonate his vision. Like the actor dispossessed of his transcendence, the poet cannot be one with his persona. His ironic consciousness merely reveals it, or rather resounds through it. The persona cannot be impersonated.

In my analysis of these works, I have attempted to explicate those statements which have relevance to the Baudelairian aesthetic in the light of their broader implications as concerns the inherent impossibilities of the artistic enterprise. What emerges is a critique of art, an awareness, due to the ironic consciousness of the artist, of the profound limitations of art. It is this critique which is the hallmark of the post-Romantic period. Chambers draws the following conclusions from the destruction of Fancioulle:

> En montrant ainsi l'artiste le plus sublime soumis comme un simple "amuseur" à la mort, Baudelaire marquait clairement le passage du Romantisme, avec sa croyance démesurée en la divinité du génie, à la modernité post-romantique, toujours marquée par les velléités, devenues nostalgies, de l'époque antérieure, mais constamment rongée par l'ironie, la lucidité, le doute qui font de tout art une dérision, une pauvre chose en présence des vérités incontrovertibles de la condition humaine. De la mort de Fancioulle à celle du comédien dans La Peste, il n'y a qu'un petit pas à franchir.[115]

Art has come to reflect not an external object, but rather itself in its painful coming-to-being. The writer of the post-Romantic period might affirm, along with Artaud, that modern child of decadent Romanticism: "I feel sometimes that I am not writing, but describing the struggles with writing, the struggles of birth."[116]

Having established the ironic portrait of the bouffon as alter ego of the artist, I now wish to examine, for their aesthetic implications, the various uses of the term bouffon itself and its cognates. Certain usages contain a curious ambiguity, whereby the droll or comic connotations of the term are negated by those of a more serious nature. Such an example may be found in the following description of Delacroix's works:

> Une seule fois, je crois, il a fait une tentative dans le drôle et le bouffon, et comme s'il avait deviné que cela était au-delà et au-dessous de sa nature, il n'y est pas revenu. (P., 1132)

That the term bouffon suggests something other than the comical is evident on two counts: firstly, the fact that it is suggested, by the parallel juxtaposition with the term "drôle," that the term bouffon implies something other than "drôle." This would be inconclusive in itself (as it might simply be a case of amplificatio) were it not for the fact that Baudelaire further qualifies the term bouffon by a strange antithesis in which are suggested both the derogatory connotations of the term, as well as the more laudatory ones. Implied in this ambiguous presentation is that extraordinarily complex emotional situation of the Romantic artist, the funambule par excellence, at once superior and inferior, beyond criticism and yet hypercritical of his being. It is significant, moreover, to note the variant "au-delà ou au-dessous," which would further reinforce the essential ambiguity of the term.

An ambiguity of another sort is raised in the following letter to Catulle Mendès of 19 January 1866:

> Ce volume [Les Epaves] a été fait sans que je m'en mêlasse; vous y trouverez des bagatelles que vous ne connaissez pas, et même des bouffonneries. Il contient malheureusement les six pièces condamnées des Fleurs du mal. . . . (Corr., II, 547)

The "bouffonneries" referred to here could be taken to imply something insignificant, on the same level as the "bagatelles." The interjection of the "même" suggests, however, that the "bouffonneries" are in some way different from the "bagatelles," whether they be interpreted as referring to a more elevated or a less elevated plane. If the former is the case, one could argue that the "bouffonneries" refer to the specific section of Les Epaves which bears the same title, which, as we have already observed, is highly serious in content, dealing with quite specific aesthetic questions.[117] If the latter is the case, the "bouffonneries" refer generally to the mélange of second-rate works which compose the Epaves, and which Baudelaire himself considered unworthy of being accorded a place in the definitive edition of Les Fleurs du mal.[118] This latter theory would be corroborated by the concluding sentence, where Baudelaire laments the inclusion of the six condemned pieces of Les Fleurs du mal in Les Epaves. Presumably, as the "malheureusement" indicates, Baudelaire considered their inclusion in Les Epaves (published by Poulet-Malassis in February-March of 1866) as somewhat sacriligious, given the fact that he had previously assigned them a place in Les Fleurs du mal.

In the letter to his mother of 9 March 1865, the bouffon reference is again equivocal. The "ouvrage" in question is Les Petits Poèmes en prose:

> . . . tu as pu deviner, par la lecture des quarante ou cinquante qui ont paru, que la confection de ces petites babioles est le résultat d'une grande concentration d'esprit. Cependant, j'espère que je réussirai à produire un ouvrage singulier, plus singulier, plus volontiers du moins que _Les Fleurs du mal_, où j'associerai l'effrayant avec le bouffon, et même la tendresse avec la haine. (_Corr._, II, 473)

What is problematic about this reference is that one is uncertain as to whether the antithetical epithets ("effrayant" and "bouffon," "tendresse" and "haine") are referring to these specific qualities in the work itself, or whether these are in fact emotions experienced by the artist in the creation of the work. If the former is the case, one could conjecture that the "effrayant" refers to such pieces as "Portrait des maîtresses" or "Laquelle est la vraie?"; the "bouffon," if interpreted in the light of its antithetical juxtaposition with the term "effrayant" would suggest that which is comical or amusing, and hence would refer to such works as "Un Plaisant" or "Le Mauvais Vitrier." If the term "bouffon" is interpreted on a more serious level, it can be taken to refer to the significant number of prose poems, and these ones of major importance, which deal with the theme of the artist-as-clown, such as "Le Fou et la Vénus," "Le Vieux Saltimbanque" or "Une Mort héroïque." As for "la tendresse," this may be found in such pieces as "Le Désespoir de la vieille," "Les Veuves" or indeed the clown poems themselves. "La haine" resonates throughout this work of Baudelaire's later years, and is manifest in the bitterness and irony of such pieces as "Le Gâteau" or "Le Galant Tireur."

If, on the other hand, these epithets are taken to constitute a _confiteor_ of the artist, they refer to the attitudes of the artist in the act of creation: they thus refer to the intrapsychic drama of the artist heroically grappling with his creation, yet fearing his own inadequacies ("effrayant"); his disabused confession of the illusory nature of his quest, which leads him to belittle his own artistic endeavours ("bouffon"); his conquest of his aesthetic impotence as he comes to appreciate and identify, almost amorously, with his creation ("la tendresse"); and the final confession by the Romantic ironist of the hypocrisy of this sentimentality, for art is not just creation, but also destruction, the destruction both of the illusion that is art, and the illusions of the artist ("la haine"). Indeed, many of the prose poems are concerned with the position of the artist vis-à-vis his work: "Les Foules" and "Les Veuves," for example, consider the need of the artist to go beyond the lonely, solitary self ("L'Etranger") and to transcend his being. Poems such as "Les Nuages" or "Une Mort héroïque," on the other hand, illustrate the vanity of this enterprise, and express the folly of art in its attempt to transcend the human condition. This latter hypothesis would be confirmed by the reference to artistic fabrication in the previous sentence of the quoted passage, which reflects certain conflicting elements in the psyche of the artist-funambule: whilst Baudelaire emphasizes the highly serious nature of the artistic enterprise ("une grande concentration d'esprit"; "je réussirai à produire un ouvrage singulier . . . volontaire"), he also admits the playfulness of the artist-jongleur as he concocts the work of art ("la confection de ces petites babioles"). It is a "grotesque" portrait of the artist as sombre yet jocular magician, as artful bouffon both confessing and veiling his ambivalent sentiments.

The following bouffon reference in relation to the projected preface for Les Fleurs du mal again would, on the face of it, suggest the playful verbal pyrotechnics or intellectual charlatanry of the artist-jongleur. However, given the previous implications of gravity and solemnity associated with the term, I would suggest that the term "bouffonnerie" is indeed equivocal and connotes the ironic synthesis of contraries so typical of Romanticism (witness the oxymoron):

> Il y a une préface en prose d'une violente bouffonnerie.
> (Corr., II, 98)

A similar ambivalence or psychic funambulism is evident in the letter to Michel Lévy, of August-September 1862; the work in question is obviously Les Fleurs du mal:

> Dans la troisième édition, . . . j'ajouterai . . . une grande préface où j'expliquerai mes trucs et ma méthode et où j'enseignerai à chacun l'art d'en faire autant. Et si je n'ai pas le courage d'écrire cette sérieuse bouffonnerie... (Corr., II, 257)

If this statement is read in conjunction with the projected preface for Les Fleurs du mal where Baudelaire, tongue-in-cheek, offers the reader a peep into the sanctuary of Art,[119] and the machinations of the literary histrio, what emerges is a histrionic perspective of art which reveals the combinations and trucs required of the aesthetic juggler to create the mechanical construct that is art:

> Montre-t-on au public, affolé aujourd'hui, indifférent demain, le mécanisme des trucs? Lui explique-t-on les retouches et les variantes improvisées aux répétitions, et jusqu'à quelle dose l'instinct et la sincérité sont mêlés aux rubriques et au charlatanisme indispensable dans l'amalgame de l'oeuvre? Lui révèle-t-on toutes les loques et les fards, les poulies, les chaînes, les repentirs, les épreuves barbouillées, bref toutes les horreurs qui composent le sanctuaire de l'art. (P., 188)

Notwithstanding the facetious intent of the author, it is precisely this aesthetic bouffonnerie which is referred to in the oxymoron "cette sérieuse bouffonnerie."

The highly serious import of the term bouffonnerie is explicitly stated in the following reference to Edgar Allan Poe:

> E. Poe n'est pas spécialement un poète et un romancier: il est poète, romancier et philosophe. Il porte le double caractère de l'illuminé et du savant. Qu'il ait fait quelques oeuvres mauvaises et hâtives, cela n'a rien d'étonnant, et sa terrible vie l'explique; mais ce qui fera son éternel éloge, c'est la préoccupation de tous les sujets réellement importants, et seuls dignes de l'attention d'un homme spirituel: probabilités, maladie de l'esprit, sciences conjecturales, espérances et calculs sur la vie ultérieure, analyse des excentriques et des parias de la vie sublunaire, bouffonneries directement symboliques.[120]

The "bouffonneries," which are the work of the "illuminé savant," could be understood as a separate category, referring to either the jongleur[121] or farceur aspects of Poe that we find, for example, in The Philosophy of Composition or "The Conqueror Worm." Another possible allusion might be to a specifically bouffonnesque work such as "Hopfrog." However, I would tend to prefer a rendering in which the "bouffonneries" stand in symbolic apposition to the categories previously mentioned, and hence refer back to Baudelaire's affirmation of their fundamental importance. The primary characteristics of the "bouffonneries" are thus volontarisme and maladie. The voluntary aspect of the "bouffonneries" ("calculs"; "analyse") is presented as being synonymous with its pathological make-up, or rather, the etiology of the latter can be attributed to the former. Implied in this synthesis is the negative connotation of disordered consciousness. In the final analysis, the "bouffonneries" represent the de-composition of a state of consciousness, or, more specifically, a state of aesthetic consciousness. Artistic composition has become equated with de-composition in the artist's psyche: "les événements les plus curieux se passent sous le ciel du crâne, dans le laboratoire étroit et mystérieux du cerveaux" (Salon de 1846, P., 887). But above all, "les bouffonneries--c'est la préoccupation de tous les sujets réellement importants."

NOTES

[1] Quoted by R. Bourgeois, L'Ironie romantique: Spectacle et jeu de Mme de Staël à G. de Nerval (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1974), p. 174

[2] J. Chevalier and A. Gheerbrant, Dictionnaire des symboles (Paris: Laffont, 1969), pp. 121-122.

[3] L.N. Bescherelle, Dictionnaire universel de la langue française (Paris: Simon, 1845-1847).

[4] A. Pougin, in La Grande Encyclopédie (Paris: Lamirault, 1886).

[5] For a study of the internalization and positive synthesis of negative criticism in the evolutionary progress of the individual to a higher level of personal integration, see K. Dabrowski, Positive Disintegration (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1964).

[6] L. Hoern-Charles, "The Clown's Function," Journal of American Folklore, 58 (1945), 34.

[7] See (i) R. Bourgeois, op. cit., p. 38; (ii) J. Starobinski, "Note sur le bouffon romantique," Cahiers du Sud, 61 (1966), 270-275.

[8] J. Starobinski, "Ironie et mélancolie II: Hoffmann," Critique, 228 (1966), 438.

[9] F. Schlegel, Fragmente (Jena and Leipzig: Diederichs, 1904), p. 138.

[10] M. Boucher, "Enthousiasme et ironie," in K.W.F. Solger: Esthetique et philosophie de la présence (Paris: Stock, 1934), pp. 104-115.

[11] K. Kraus, quoted by W.H. Auden, "Writing," in Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, ed. D. Lodge (London: Longman, 1972), p. 643.

[12] W.H. Auden, loc. cit.

[13] The feminine form of this name is significant if considered in the light of the androgynous aesthetic principle; see M. Butor, Histoire extraordinaire: Essai sur un rêve de Baudelaire (Paris: Gallimard, 1961).

[14] J.-P. Sartre, Baudelaire (Paris: Gallimard, 1963).

[15] R. Laforgue, L'Echec de Baudelaire: Essai psychanalytique sur la névrose de Charles Baudelaire (Paris: Denoël et Steele, 1931).

[16] E. Starkie, Baudelaire (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), p. 644.

[17] C. Mauron, Le Dernier Baudelaire (Paris: Corti, 1966).

[18] For a study of Baudelaire from the christian point of view, see (i) P. Emmanuel, Baudelaire (Bruges: Desclée De Brouwer, 1967). Like Laforgue (op. cit.), Emmanuel postulates a Freudian etiology for Baudelaire's "esprit de damné"; (ii) C. du Bos, "Meditation on the Life of Baudelaire," in Baudelaire: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. H. Peyre (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 38-66.

[19] This highly pertinent remark is made by Y. Belaval in Les Conduites d'échec (Paris: Gallimard, 1953), p. 76.

[20] R. Bourgeois, op. cit.

[21] T. Gautier, Les Jeunes-France, quoted by R. Bourgeois, op. cit., pp. 153-154.

[22] J. Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, quoted by D. Muecke, Irony (London: Methuen, 1970), p. 39.

[23] Cf. Peintures murales d'Eugène Delacroix: "Du haut de la rampe, à un étage supérieur, plusieurs personnages contemplent avec horreur et ravissement le travail des divins bourreaux" (P., 1110).

[24] The increasing importance of subjectivism in the eighteenth century was, no doubt, influential in the development of Romantic irony.

[25] J. Starobinski, op. cit., p. 454.

[26] Cf. Valéry's "Le Cimetière marin" (*Anthologie des poètes du dix-neuvième siècle*, ed. E. Maynial [Paris: Hachette, 1935]), p. 505:

> O pour moi seul, à moi seul, en moi-même,
> Auprès d'un coeur, aux sources du poème,
> Entre le vide et l'événement pur,
> J'attends l'écho de ma grandeur interne,
> Amère, sombre et sonore citerne,
> Sonnant dans l'âme un creux toujours futur!

This may be compared with Sartre's theories concerning the dichotomous nature of consciousness. Sartre is, indeed, the "Romantic Rationalist" *par excellence*.

[27] See (i) R. Wilcocks, "Towards a Re-examination of 'L'Héautontimorouménos,'" *French Review*, 48 (1975), 566-579; (ii) M. Zimmerman, "Problèmes d'annotations de textes baudelairiennes: Défense et illustration," in *Regards sur Baudelaire: Actes du colloque de London (Canada), 1970*, ed. W. Bush (Paris: Minard, 1974), pp. 135-151.

[28] R. Bourgeois, op. cit., p. 32.

[29] J.J.C. von Grimmelshausen, *Simplicius Simplicissimus*, trans. G. Shulz-Behrend (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), p. 55.

Another example of the playful distortion of reality moulded through the power of fictional imagination, is Hermann Hesse's delightful autobiographical essay, *Life Story Briefly Told* (*Autobiographical Writings*, ed. T. Ziolkowski [New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972]), pp. 43-61. During his extended stay in prison, the artist amuses himself by painting on the wall of his cell an elaborate mountain landscape in which a train is shown entering a tunnel. The story concludes with Hesse, weary with the interrogations and the tedium of jail, climbing into the painted train, leaving behind him the prison and reality, as he disappears into the tunnel of his own creative imagination: "I . . . freed myself from the illusion of reality. I then requested the guards to be patient for a moment longer since I had to step into my picture and look after something in the train. . . . Then I made myself small and stepped into my picture, got aboard the little train, and rode in the little train into the little black tunnel. For a while sooty smoke continued to be visible, pouring out of the round hole, then the smoke dispersed and with it the entire picture and I with the picture" (pp. 61-62).

The merging of the author into the fabric of his fiction is likewise the theme of Hesse's *The Journey to the East* (Great Britain: Peter Owen, 1956). In this context, one might also consider Ferlinghetti's poem "Don't Let That Horse. . ." (*A Coney Island of the Mind* [New York: New Directions, 1958]).

[30] See R.J. Klein, "Thyrsus: The Ironic Stance of Baudelaire's Poetry," Diss. Yale 1968. Cf. also K. Weinberg, Henri Heine: Romantique défroqué, héraut du symbolisme français (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954).

[31] See R.J. Klein, ibid., pp. 176-177.

[32] O. Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," in The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde, ed. R. Ellmann (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 320. Cf. The Diary of Anaïs Nin: 1931-1934 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966), p. 18: the author in question is Henry Miller: "For Henry, illusions and lies are synonymous. Art and illusion are lies. Embellishment."

[33] S.T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, quoted by R.L. Brett, Fancy and Imagination (London: Methuen, 1969), p. 43.

[34] F. Leakey, Baudelaire and Nature (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969), p. 281.

[35] R. Misrahi, "L'Art et son sérieux," Deucalion (L'Art et le jeu), 6 (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1957), pp. 145-163.

[36] R. Bourgeois, op. cit., pp. 246-247.

[37] Ibid., p. 136.

[38] M. Leiris, "Picasso et la comédie humaine ou les avatars de Gros Pied," in Brisées (Paris: Mercure de France, 1966), p. 184. Cf. the final scene of Les Enfants du paradis (film script by J. Prévert [London: Lorrimer, 1968]), where the unmasked Pierrot, Baptiste, is carried away by the populace become a proliferation of Pierrots at carnival time.

[39] M. Leiris, op. cit., p. 192.

[40] R. Bourgeois, op. cit., p. 247.

[41] F. Schlegel, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

[42] It is interesting to contrast Bourgeois' (op. cit.) translation of Schlegel with that of Starobinski ("Ironie et mélancolie I: Le Théâtre de Carlo Gozzi," Critique, 228 [1966], 303). The former translates "Stimmung" as "état d'esprit," whereas the latter prefers "état d'âme." I would tend to agree with Bourgeois, inasmuch as his

version implies a conscious act of the thinking mind, whereas Starobinski's would seem to suggest a more passive state of soul.

[43] V. Jankélévitch, L'Ironie (Paris: Flammarion, 1964), p. 17.

[44] It is interesting to compare, once again, the translations of Bourgeois (op. cit.) and Starobinski (op. cit.). Whereas the former translates "gewöhnliche" as "traditionnel," the latter offers "ordinaire." I would tend to prefer the latter on account of its emphasis on the vulgarity and degradation of the "Buffo," although the former is not without its merits, as to stress the traditional aspect of the "Buffo" would be to accentuate its affiliation with the commedia dell'arte.

[45] Cf. (i) Théodore de Banville: "Je lis dans un critique: 'Pour deviner l'âme d'un poète, ou du moins sa principale préoccupation, cherchons dans ses oeuvres quel est le mot ou quels sont les mots qui s'y représentent avec le plus de fréquence. Le mot traduira l'obsession'" (P., 735); (ii) La Double Vie: "On a souvent répété: Le style, c'est l'homme: mais ne pourrait-on pas dire avec une égale justesse: Le choix des sujets, c'est l'homme?" (P., 662).

[46] J. Vier, Histoire, substance et poésie des Fleurs du mal (Paris: Minard, 1959), p. 15.

[47] L.M. Porter, "The Invisible Worm: Decay in the Privileged Moments of Baudelaire's Poetry," L'Esprit Créateur, 13 (1973), 100-113.

[48] M. Blanchot, La Part du feu, quoted by R. Galand, Baudelaire: Poétiques et poésies (Paris: Nizet, 1969), p. 188.

[49] M. Boucher, op. cit.

[50] Ibid., p. 106.

[51] G. Poulet, "Baudelaire et la circonférence changeante," Courrier du Centre International d'Etudes Poétiques (Brussels), 21-22 (1958), 17.

[52] Ibid., p. 19. For a study of the paradoxical interchange of spirit and matter, see A. Bonzon, "La Dégradation des images dans la poésie baudélairienne," Boletim, Universidade de São Paulo, Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciencias et Letras, 222 (1958), 5-38.

[53] M. Boucher, op. cit., p. 112.

[54] L. Pirandello, "The Essence, Characteristics, and Substance of Humor," in *On Humor*, trans. A. Illiano and D.P. Testa (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), p. 112.

[55] F. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 52. Cf. A. Nin, op. cit., p. 37: "June sat filled with champagne. I have no need of it. She talked about the effects of hashish. I said, 'I have known such states without hashish. I do not need drugs. I carry all that in myself.' At this she was irritated. She does not realize that, being an artist, I want to be in those states of ecstasy or vision while keeping my awareness intact. I am the poet and I must feel and see. I do not want to be anaesthetized. I am drunk on June's beauty, but I am also aware of it."

[56] J.-P. Sartre, op. cit., p. 26.

[57] G. Blin, *Baudelaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1939), p. 36.

[58] This does not mean, however, that the medium of the plastic arts cannot, indeed, be charged with its own "prehistory"; it is not always primary matter (cf. Picasso's *Head of a Bull*).

[59] J.-P. Sartre, *Situations II: Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), p. 94.

[60] S. Burckhardt, "The Poet as Fool and Priest," *ELH*, 25 (1956), 298.

[61] W. Zucker, "The Image of the Clown," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 12 (1954), 310-317.

[62] R. Caillois, *L'Homme et le sacré* (Paris: Gallimard, 1950).

[63] M. Blanchot, "L'Echec de Baudelaire," *L'Arche*, 24-25 (1948), 87-88.

[64] J.-M. Rey, "L'Homme, le monde et leur jeu," *Critique* (Paris), 247 (1967), 1052. Cf. the prose poem entitled "Clown" by Henri Michaux (*L'Espace du dedans* [Paris: Gallimard, 1944]), pp. 255-256:

Un jour.
Un jour, bientôt peut-être,
Un jour j'arracherai l'ancre qui tient mon
navire loin des mers.

Avec la sorte de courage qu'il faut pour être rien et rien que rien, je lâcherai ce qui paraissait m'être indissolublement proche.

Je trancherai, je le renverserai, je le romprai, je le ferai dégringoler.

D'un coup dégorgeant ma misérable pudeur, mes misérables combinaisons et enchaînements "de fil en aiguille."

Vidé de l'abcès d'être quelqu'un, je boirai à nouveau l'espace nourricier.

A coups de ridicules, de déchéances (qu'est-ce que la déchéance?), par éclatement, par vide, par une totale dissipation-dérision-purgation, j'expulserai de moi la forme qu'on croyait si bien attachée, composée, coordonnée, assortie à mon entourage et à mes semblables, si dignes, si dignes, mes semblables.

Réduit à une humilité de catastrophe, à un nivellement parfait comme après une intense trouille.

Ramené au-dessous de toute mesure à mon rang réel, au rang infime que je ne sais quelle idée-ambition m'avait fait déserter.

Anéanti quant à la hauteur, quant à l'estime.

Perdu en un endroit lointain (ou même pas), sans nom, sans identité.

Clown, abattant dans la risée, dans le grotesque, dans l'esclaffement, le sens que contre toute lumière je m'étais fait de mon importance.

Je plongerai.
Sans bourse dans l'infini-esprit sous-jacent ouvert à
tous,
ouvert moi-même à une nouvelle et incroyable rosée
à force d'être nul
et ras...
et risible...

[65] J.-P. Sartre, op. cit., p. 64.

[66] Ibid., p. 65.

[67] M. Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought, trans. A. Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 208.

[68] For an analysis of the problematics of metaphorical language, see M. McCanles, "The Literal and the Metaphorical: Dialectic or Interchange," PMLA, 91 (1976), 279-290.

[69] A. Giraud, Héros et Pierrots (Paris: Fischbacher, 1898), pp. 153-154.

[70] E. Welsford, The Fool: His Social and Literary History (Gloucester, Mass.: Smith, 1966), p. 313.

[71] F. Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p. 234.

[72] Y. Delétang-Tardiff, "Fragments sur le mime, le clown et l'acteur," Théâtre (Paris), 4 (1945), 237-260.

[73] F. Nietzsche, "The Acceptance of Untruth," in The Modern Tradition: Backgrounds of Modern Literature, ed. R. Ellmann and C. Fiedelson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 98.

[74] W. Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in Illuminations (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968), p. 194.

[75] It is important to note, as Wohlfarth ("Aspects of Baudelaire's Literary Dandyism," Diss. Yale 1971, p. 5) aptly remarks, that the self-canonization of the Romantic Poet is actually a retrospective projection, the reactive by-product of the Poet's actual demythologization, rather than the status quo ante.

[76] It is interesting to note the antithetical juxtaposition pertaining to muddied idealism in the following: (i) "La Femme sauvage et la petite maîtresse": "A vous voir ainsi, ma belle délicate, les pieds dans la fange et les yeux tournés vapoureusement vers le ciel, comme pour lui demander un roi, on dirait vraisemblablement une jeune grenouille qui invoquerait l'idéal" (P., 243); (ii) Les Paradis artificiels: "C'est dans cette dépravation du sens de l'infini que gît, selon moi, la raison de tous les excès coupables, depuis l'ivresse solitaire et concentrée du littérateur, qui, obligé de chercher dans l'opium un soulagement à une douleur physique, et ayant ainsi découvert une source de jouissances morbides, en a fait peu à peu son unique hygiène et comme le soleil de sa vie spirituelle, jusqu'à l'ivrognerie la plus répugnante des faubourgs, qui, le cerveau plein de flamme et de gloire, se roule ridiculement dans les ordures de la route" (P., 349). Obvious parallels suggest themselves here: firstly, "Le Vin des chiffonniers" and secondly, Baudelaire's projected psychological drama L'Ivrogne, a detailed plan of which may be found in his letter to the actor Tisserant of 28 January 1854 (Corr., I, 256-262); (iii) "Tu mettrais l'univers. . .": "O fangeuse grandeur! sublime ignominie!," P., 27); (iv) cf. the dis-ease of Baudelaire the dandy-aesthete in his "dream," described in the letter to Asselineau of 13 March 1856. See M. Butor, Histoire extraordinaire: Essai sur un rêve de Baudelaire (Paris: Gallimard, 1961).

[77] P. Valéry, "Philosophie de la danse," *Oeuvres*, ed. J. Hytier (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), I, 1390-1403.

[78] *Théodore de Banville* (P., 738).

[79] Variant manuscripts of this poem: Godoy, the facsimile of which may be found in *La Revue de l'Amérique Latine* (July 1924); Pichois, which may be found in the Smith-Lesouef foundation at the Bibliothèque Nationale, MS 166 (*RHL* [1957], pp. 584-585); anonymous manuscript reproduced in *Douze Poèmes* (1857) offer the following modification of these lines: "On voit un chiffonnier qui revient de travers,/Se cognant, se heurtant comme un faiseur de vers." Cf. the following juxtaposition of "le chiffonnier" with the Romantic artist in *La Fanfarlo*: "Samuel . . . rentrait dans la classe des gens *absorbants*, --des hommes insupportables et passionnés, chez qui le métier gâte la conversation, et à qui toute occasion est bonne, même une connaissance improvisée au coin d'un arbre ou d'une rue, --fût-ce d'un chiffonnier, --pour développer arbitrairement leurs idées" (P., 489-490).

[80] Cf. W. Benjamin (op. cit., p. 196) where is discussed the "disintegration of aura," that is to say modern, industrial man's alienation from the supra-reality or "aura" of the material world. On the same theme, see W. Benjamin, "L'Oeuvre d'art au temps de ses techniques de reproduction," in *Oeuvres choisies*, trans. M. de Grandillac (Paris: Julliard, 1955), pp. 193-235.

[81] A. Ferran, "Baudelaire juge de Baudelaire," *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 36 (1929), 453.

[82] Also, one should not overlook the commercial implications of this title: Samuel, the *Krämer*, who takes for his motto *Auri sacra fames*, is the seeker of "l'or frais." The "or" can, of course, be interpreted metaphorically: the artist is a kind of *orfèvre*, transmuting, after the fashion of the alchemist, the dross of the city into poetic gold ("Tu m'as donné ta boue et j'en ai fait de l'or," P., 180). I am indebted to Dr. Wilcocks for discussion on this point.

[83] A. Guérin, "Les Prêtres et les pîtres," *La Plume*, 78 (1892), 344-345.

[84] Louis d'Eristal ("La Décadence littéraire," *La Plume*, 83 [1892], 149), a literary critic of the same period, describes as follows what he considers to be "la décadence littéraire": "Alors aussi, comme l'a rapporté Théophile Gautier, dans son *Histoire du Romantisme*, les nouveaux venus, Petrus Borel, Aloysius Bertrand, etc... combattirent moins pour la cause du maître, qu'afin de

'terrasser l'hydre du perruquinisme, d'épouvanter les épiciers, bourgeois et philistins.'

C'est ce que font à l'heure actuelle nombre de jeunes, incompris, hélas! de la foule et dont le talent subtil se gaspille en excentricités acrobatiques. Aujourd'hui que tant de gens ont du métier, ce qu'on veut acquérir, c'est une originalité.

On la recherche à tout prix, coûte que coûte; et, trop souvent, derrière cette originalité apparente se cache un névrosisme impuissant, doublé d'une cruauté voulu."

Cf. G. Michaud (*Le Message poétique du symbolisme* [Paris: Nizet, 1947], I, 225-229), for a detailed description of the neurotic eccentricity of the bohemian "cabaret" artists of the *fin de siècle* who adopted such outlandish names as the "Hirsutes," the "Hydropathes," the "Zutistes" and the "Jemenfoutistes."

It is interesting to note that whilst the artist was being degraded via the comparison with the vulgar fairground artists, the latter, on the contrary, took pride in giving themselves the title of "artiste." See G. Matoré, *Le Vocabulaire et la société sous Louis-Philippe* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1967), p. 236: "D'HAUTEL: Les histrions, les plus viles bateleurs . . . prennent depuis quelque temps à Paris le titre d'*Artistes*."

[85] See A. Vitu, "Baudelaire aux funambules," *L'Echo*, 27 September 1846, quoted by W.T. Bandy and C. Pichois in *Baudelaire devant ses contemporains* (Paris: Rocher, 1957), p. 90.

[86] L. Hoerr-Charles, op. cit. Cf. the star-bright laughter of the immortals in Hesse's magic theatre of the mind portrayed in *Steppenwolf* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963).

[87] See J.M. Smith, "The *Homo Duplex* in Nineteenth Century French Literature," in *Studies in Honour of A.G. Engstrom*, ed. R.T. Cargo and J. Mickel (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1972), pp. 127-138.

[88] C. Graña, *Bohemian versus Bourgeois: French Society and the French Man of Letters in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1964), p. 25.

[89] J. Starobinski, "Sur quelques répondants allégoriques du poète," *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 67 (1967), 410. In this context, one might profitably reflect upon Picasso's clowns, with their infinite sadness, their unheroic resignation, their lifeless bodies drained of all energy (e.g. *Harlequin on Horseback* or *The Organ Grinder*).

[90] J. Janin, *Deburau: Histoire du théâtre à quatre sous* (Paris: Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1881), pp. 180-181.

[91] C. Mauron, op. cit., p. 59.

[92] J. Starobinski, op. cit., p. 412.

[93] From this perspective, cf. Picasso's canvas of the blue period entitled _Harlequin_, with its intensely introspective figure who, in fact, seems to show more affinities with _Pierrot_ than with Harlequin. Cf. also _The Blue Dancer (Pierrot and Dancer)_, a canvas of the same period, where may be seen the wistfully Romantic _Pierrot_ in pursuit of "la belle ténébreuse"; he is strangely withdrawn from the action into his own private mental world; cf. also _The Jester_ and _Two Harlequins_.

[94] M. Heidegger, op. cit., p. 11

[95] L. Ferlinghetti, "Constantly Risking Absurdity," _A Coney Island of the Mind_ (New York: New Directions, 1958), p. 30.

[96] See Lugné-Poe, _Le Sot du tremplin: Souvenirs et impressions de théâtre_ (Paris: Gallimard, 1930).

[97] S. Sontag, "The Artist as Exemplary Sufferer," in _Against Interpretation_ (New York: Delta, 1966), pp. 37-48.

[98] First Corinthians, IV, x.

[99] R.-G. Dommergue, "Etude psycho-physiologique des dandys romantiques, ou le dandy romantique hyperthyroïdien physiologique." Diss. Université de Paris, 1971.

[100] A. Nin, op. cit., p. 112.

[101] P. Emmanuel, op. cit., pp. 55-58.

[102] E. Auerbach, "The Aesthetic Dignity of the _Fleurs du mal_," in _Baudelaire: A Collection of Critical Essays_, ed. H. Peyre (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 166-167.

[103] S. Mallarmé, "Brise marine," _Mallarmé_, ed. A. Hartley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 29.

[104] In "L'Examen de minuit," Baudelaire chastises himself for having "baisé la stupide Matière" (P., 169), indeed a sacriligious act for the "prêtre orgueilleux de la Lyre" (ibid.).

[105] One might note, in passing, that the traditional bipartite costume of the fool is itself symbolic of a *double entendre*.

[106] J. Starobinski, op. cit., p. 409.

[107] It is undoubtedly ironic that Baudelaire himself should be characterized as a *Pierrot* figure. See A. Tabarant, *La Vie artistique au temps de Baudelaire* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1963), pp. 112-113: "Il lui a pris fantaisie d'adopter la blouse, complément baroque du pantalon à pieds et des souliers vernis. Une blouse de forte toile, sorte de vareuse marine à ample col, qui se balance à vide le long de ce corps si mince. . . . Ce masque blême, troué d'yeux noirs sous un front découvert jusqu'aux noires ailes de la chevelure . . . ce masque et cet accoutrement saisissent les passants, qui se demandent à quelle humanité ils peuvent appartenir. La démarche s'accompagne d'un dandinement quasi mécanique, et Nadar en compare les saccades à celle des petits acteurs en bois du spectacle de Séraphin. . . . Voyez-vous ce personnage lunaire. . . ."

[108] C. Mauron, op. cit., p. 42.

[109] M. Maurin, in "Le Saltimbanque héroïque: De Baudelaire à Henri de Regnier," *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 74 (1974), 1010-1014, goes further in attempting to explain the allegorical antagonism. He sees not only the Prince, to be equated with the *surmoi*, but also the *enfant*, to be equated with the *inconscient*, as antagonistic towards the artist. The artist thus walks a perilous tight-rope between the exigencies of society and those of his inner self. Maurin does not, however, appear to take cognizance of the fact that Fancioulle himself, as his name would indicate, also embodies, to a certain extent, the "infantile" (to be understood in the context of Baudelaire's aesthetics) perception of the imaginative artist.

[110] S. Mallarmé, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. H. Mondor and G. Jean-Aubry (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), p. 310.

[111] M. Blanchot, op. cit., pp. 99-100.

[112] T. de Banville, quoted by J. Starobinski, "Portrait de l'artiste en saltimbanque," *Critique* (Paris), 271 (1969), 1043.

[113] R. Chambers, "'L'Art sublime du comédien' ou le regardant et le regardé: Autour d'un mythe baudelairien," in *Saggi e Richerche di Letteratura Francese*, 11 (Rome: Bulzoni, 1971), p. 245.

[114] J. Starobinski, op. cit., p. 408.

[115] R. Chambers, op. cit., p. 251.

[116] A. Artaud, quoted by A. Nin, op. cit., p. 192. Cf. also A. Nin, op. cit., II, 235: "My work must be the closest to the life flow. I must install myself inside of the seed, growth, mysteries. I must prove the possibility of instantaneous, immediate, spontaneous art. My art must be like a miracle. Before it goes through the conduits of the brain and becomes an abstraction, a fiction, a lie. It must be . . . more like a personified ancient ritual, where every spiritual thought was made visible, enacted, represented."

[117] It is curious to note that whilst the Adam edition of Les Fleurs du mal does not have a specific subsection of Les Epaves entitled Bouffonneries, the Le Dantec edition, on the other hand, groups four pièces de circonstance under this title.

[118] A. Adam, Les Fleurs du mal (Paris: Garnier, 1961), p. 450: ". . . l'éditeur des Fleurs du mal ne peut considérer Les Epaves comme un supplément aux Fleurs du mal. D'abord parce que L'Avertissement de l'éditeur est formel: 'ce sont là des poèmes auxquels M. Charles Baudelaire n'a pas cru devoir faire place dans une édition définitive des Fleurs du mal.' D'autre part, deux de ces pièces, 'Les Promesses d'un visage' et 'Les Monstres,' sont d'une extrême crudité de ton: Baudelaire savait mesurer la distance entre Les Fleurs du mal et la littérature des Parnasses satyriques, et n'aurait pas imaginé que ces deux pièces pussent être insérées dans son recueil. D'autres enfin, pièces de circonstance, vers en l'honneur de Daumier ou sur Lola de Valence, ou simples 'bouffonneries,' ne sauraient introduire dans une édition des Fleurs du mal qu'un élément discordant qui en affaiblit l'effet." Naturally, I cannot agree with Adam's classification of the "bouffonneries" along with the other trifles which compose the Epaves.

[119] This is achieved negatively by way of preterition.

[120] Curiosités esthétiques, l'art romantique et autres oeuvres critiques (Paris: Garnier, 1962), p. 584.

[121] This is by no means a derogatory term, as Baudelaire himself points out: (i) Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe: "Il faut que je m'explique avec quelque soin; car récemment un critique imprudent se servait, pour dénigrer Edgar Poe et pour infirmer la sincérité de mon admiration, du mot jongleur que j'avais moi-même appliqué au noble poète presque comme un éloge" (ibid., p. 62); (ii) Letter to Sainte-Beuve: "On fera semblant de ne vouloir considérer Poe que comme jongleur, mais je reviendrai à outrance sur le caractère surnaturel de sa poésie et de ses contes" (26 March 1856; Corr., I, 345).

> Prove this value, this effect, . . .
> to be my treatment, prove that I
> haven't so shaken them together as
> the conjuror I profess to be _must_
> consummately shake, and I consent but
> to parade as before a booth at a
> fair.
>
> Henry James[1]

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL AND AESTHETIC ACROBATICS

A prototype of the bouffon is to be found in the _jongleur_. Although one tends to associate the _jongleur_ with the Middle Ages, the term was used in the nineteenth century to refer to the _saltimbanques_, acrobats, and other peripatetic popular artists. The Bescherelle dictionary of 1845-1847, gives the following entry under _jongleur_:

> Autrefois, espèce de ménétrier qui se joignait aux troubadours et allait chanter chez les princes et dans les maisons des grands seigneurs. Aujourd'hui, charlatan, saltimbanque, faiseur de tours de passe-passe et d'escamotage.[2]

Like the _bouffon_ in the form of the historical court jester, the _jongleur_ metaphor suggests the problems of sponsorship facing the Romantic artist, and constitutes something of an idyll by contrast with the latter's position:

> Leur métier consistait à divertir un public disposé à les écouter et les rétribuer: dans les cours des châteaux, sur le parvis des cathédrales, sur les places publiques. . . . A partir du douzième siècle, avec le développement des communications, l'accroissement des échanges, la transformation de la société, le jongleur évolue: d'histrion il devient poète et introduit une note laïque dans la culture. Princes et nobles ouvrent leurs palais. Les jongleurs les plus appréciés deviennent "ménestrels," c'est-à-dire qu'ils cessent de voyager et s'établissent auprès d'un seigneur qui les loge et les protège.[3]

On the figurative level, however, the manual dexterity and sleight-of-hand trickery of the _jongleur_ come to symbolize the notion of hypocrisy and charlatanry. The Larousse dictionary of 1873 offers this definition of the figurative sense:

> Fig: Hypocrisie, menterie, tromperie, charlatanisme, parole ou action ayant pour but de déguiser une fâcheuse vérité sous de belles apparences.[4]

The proferring of beautiful truths, we remember, the embellishment of what would otherwise be unacceptable, constitutes the essential art of the bouffon.

There are two fundamental aspects to the image of the jongleur: the social and the aesthetic. In the first instance, the jongleur adopts the mask of the farceur (as the etymology from the latin joculator would suggest), the witty exponent of society's discontents. In the second instance, the image of the jongleur-acrobat fuses with that of the jongleur-thaumaturge to stenographically represent the stylistic acrobatics of the artist, as well as the prestidigitation required of the artist-as-illusionist as he conjures up his fictional universe.

In a letter to Sainte-Beuve of 26 March 1856, Baudelaire, taking up the comparison he had already made in his article on Poe of the same year, attempts to explain the significance of the jongleur metaphor as it relates to his spiritual brother:

> On fera semblant de ne vouloir considérer Poe que comme jongleur, mais je reviendrai à outrance sur le caractère surnaturel de sa poésie et de ses contes. Il n'est Américain qu'en tant que Jongleur. Quant au reste, c'est presque une pensée anti-américaine. D'ailleurs, il s'est moqué de ses compatriotes le plus qu'il a pu.
> (Corr., I, 345)

The primary implication of the term jongleur is pejorative: the term refers back to the insignificant trifles ("jongleries, conjecturisme, canards," ibid., 344) found in the first volume of the Nouvelles Histoires extraordinaires. Baudelaire is, here, referring to the preface he intends to write for the second volume of the Nouvelles Histoires extraordinaires, where he hopes to contrast these superficial jongleries with the aesthetic jongleries of the second volume contained in "le caractère surnaturel de sa poésie" (ibid., 345). As he states previously: "Le deuxième volume est d'un fantastique plus relevé: hallucinations, maladies mentales, grotesque pur, surnaturalisme, etc." (ibid., 344).

Baudelaire further clarifies the positive significance which he attaches to this term in his Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe of 1857, where the art of the jongleur is again defined in dualistic terms:

> Dans ce bouillonnement de médiocrités, dans ce monde épris de perfectionnements matériels . . . dans cette société avide d'étonnements, amoureuse de la vie, mais surtout d'une vie pleine d'excitations, un homme a paru qui a été grand, non seulement par sa subtilité métaphysique, par la beauté sinistre ou ravissante de ses conceptions, par la rigueur de son analyse, mais grand aussi et non moins grand comme caricature. —Il faut que je m'explique avec quelque soin; car récemment un critique imprudent se servait, pour dénigrer Edgar Poe et pour infirmer la sincérité de mon admiration, du mot jongleur que j'avais moi-même appliqué au noble poète presque comme un éloge.
>
> Du sein d'un monde goulu, affamé de matérialités, Poe s'est élancé dans les rêves. . . . Il fut donc une admirable protestation. . . . L'auteur qui, dans le Colloque entre Monos et Una, lâche à torrents son mépris et son dégoût sur la démocratie, le progrès et la civilisation, cet auteur est le même qui, pour enlever la crédulité, pour ravir la badauderie des siens, a le plus énergiquement posé la souveraineté humaine et le plus ingénieusement fabriqué les canards les plus flatteurs pour l'orgueil de l'homme moderne. Pris sous ce jour, Poe m'apparaît comme un ilote qui veut faire rougir son maître. Enfin, pour affirmer ma pensée d'une manière encore plus nette, Poe fut toujours grand, non seulement dans ses conceptions nobles, mais encore comme farceur.[5]

The aesthetic enterprise of the artist ("subtilité métaphysique"; "beauté sinistre") is sharply contrasted with the utilitarian ideology of a people devoid of aesthetic sensibilities ("Du sein d'un monde goulu, affamé de matérialités, Poe s'est élancé dans les rêves"). This acerbic critique of the confusion between material and moral progress in American democratic society clearly illustrates the social aspect of jonglerie. Poe's jonglerie is clearly aligned with the caricatural and farceur nature of his works. Decrying the "syphilisation" of American society, a theme echoed in the celebrated passage in Fusées ("La mécanique nous aura tellement américanisés, le progrès aura si bien atrophié en nous toute la partie spirituelle. . .," P., 1263), Poe embodies the crise de conscience of his era; he is the "ilote qui veut faire rougir son maître." The term jongleur, as Butor explains, must be understood in the light of Poe's anti-American stance; for Butor, anti-Franklinism and jonglerie are, in fact, synonymous. The jongleur, as reflector of society, adopts the traditional rôle of the bouffon-as-Eulenspiegel:

> Il y a en effet dans ce pays nouveau, malgré tous les symptômes de précoce sénilité qu'il y découvre, une incontestable, une passionnante modernité. On voit ainsi la fascination se mêler constamment au dénigrement, et si Poe est si grand et si important, c'est que la critique qu'il fait de la vie américaine n'est pas extérieur à celle-ci, mais qu'elle est l'Amérique se retournant pour la première fois contre elle-même, réfutant elle-même les conclusions hâtives que voudrait tirer de son spectacle certaine bourgeoisie française.
>
> La jonglerie est le moment même de ce retournement.[6]

However, Butor's interpretation, due to its excessive limitations, is itself somewhat of a deforming mirror: the crux of his argument rests on the line: "Il n'est Américain qu'en tant que Jongleur."

It would appear that Butor, practising a little jonglerie himself, has reinterpreted this line to read: "Il n'est Jongleur qu'en tant qu'Américain."

Similarly, Baudelaire himself may be considered somewhat of a jongleur in his use of Les Fleurs du mal to convey his critique of nineteenth-century France with its staunch belief in utilitarianism and progressivism. Refuting the facile optimism of the enlightenment with its fundamental belief in the moral and spiritual progress of man ("Cette morale-là irait jusqu'à dire: DESORMAIS ON NE FERA QUE DES LIVRES CONSOLANTES ET SERVANT A DEMONTRER QUE L'HOMME EST NE BON, ET QUE TOUS LES HOMMES SONT HEUREUX. --Abominable hypocrisie!," P., 182). Baudelaire chooses to confront society with its own repressed malaise, to stir the conscience of the self-complacent material progressist, the "hypocrite lecteur," by offering him an unflattering and unwelcome image of his baser self. He thus describes Les Fleurs du mal as "un livre destiné à représenter L'AGITATION DE L'ESPRIT DANS LE MAL" (P., 181). One might pause to consider to what extent Baudelaire's ironic advocacy of an optimistic literature was prophetic; consider, for example, modern Soviet socialist realism or the overly sanguine nature of much modern American literature (The Joy of Cooking, The Joy of Sex, etc.).

Traditionally, the clown figure[7] is the embodiment of human frailty or perversity, whether in the form of the sacrificial scapegoat, which may be identified with the Calibanesque clod, or in the form of its diabolical prototype, as, for example, in the allegorical presentation of Vice in the mediaeval mystery plays or in the Hellekin legend[8] of the same period, which may be considered exemplars of the Ariel tradition. Like the Renaissance jester (I have in mind here the Holbein cartoon entitled: *Ein Narr, der seine Kasperlfiguren zu bewundern scheint*) whose sombre duality was externalized in his *marotte* capped with an emblematic replica of his own self,[9] the clown holds up to man the deformed image of his hypocritical self. Intended to represent the moral conscience of the era, *Les Fleurs du mal* fulfil, on the literary score, the function of the clown. The denunciation of *Les Fleurs du mal* reveals the author as a modern type of sacrificial fool.

The deliberately flamboyant critique of contemporary literary practices, such as his attack in *Comment on paie ses dettes quand on a du génie* (published in *Le Corsaire-Satan* of 24 November 1845) on Balzac's commissioning of hack writers, or his outrageous satire of the *Salon de 1846* which we find in an anonymous pamphlet entitled *Le Salon caricatural de 1846*, composed in collaboration with Banville and Vitu, or his anonymous contributions to *Les Causeries du Tintamarre* (1846-1847) where contemporaneous events are satirized in truly histrionic fashion, or his savage diatribe against his *bête noire*, that morass of self-complacent stagnation, the Bourgeois, symbolized in the "brute hyperboréenne des anciens jours, éternel Esquimau porte-lunettes, ou plutôt porte-écailles, que toutes les visions de Damas, tous les tonnerres et les éclairs ne sauraient éclairer!" (P., 1071)--these are but some of the works which testify to the grimacing irony of the *cabotin-farceur*. Nor was this attitude of defiance confined to his literature alone: transposed onto the existential plane, witness the glacial irony and defamatory paradoxes of the legendary _provocateur_ and _mystificateur_; the following is a description of Baudelaire in the guise of the _jongleur_-acrobat at one of Madame Sabatier's "_dimanches_" at the Rue Frochot:

> Il s'y applique à une acrobatie de paradoxes; il y aiguise des flèches trempées de poisons rares; il nargue, il irrite, il scandalise.[10]

Baudelaire's appreciation of Poe's "canards" reflects the eternal joker in Baudelaire himself ("Raconter pompeusement des choses comiques," _Fusées_, P., 1250), the self-styled "parfait cabotin"[11]:

> Fidèle à son douloureux programme, l'auteur des _Fleurs du mal_ a dû, en parfait comédien, façonner son esprit à tous les sophismes comme à toutes les corruptions (Author's note prefacing the section entitled "Révolte" of _Les Fleurs du mal_, P., 1557)

This passage should be read in conjunction with the following extract taken from the projected preface to _Les Fleurs du mal_:

> Mais j'ai un de ces heureux caractères qui tirent une jouissance de la haine, et qui se glorifient dans le mépris. Mon goût diaboliquement passionné de la bêtise me fait trouver des plaisirs particuliers dans les travestissements de la calomnie. Chaste comme le papier, sobre comme l'eau, porté à la dévotion comme une communiante, inoffensif comme une victime, il ne me déplairait pas de passer pour un débauché, un ivrogne, un impie et un assassin. (P., 188)

That Baudelaire was successful in concocting his own "legend"--legend which, as Sartre[12] would have it, Baudelaire fabricated in order to defabricate--there is no doubt. Both for his own generation and for posterity, Baudelaire was the epitome of the "poseur,"[13] the "fanfaron,"[14] the "charlatan."[15] A contemporary revue, _Le Boulevard_ of 1862, offers the following ghoulish "physionomie caricaturale" of "Les Nuits de Monsieur Baudelaire" by Emile Durandeau. Banville characterizes thus Durandeau's Goyaesque vision:

> Le grabat, la poutre, la tête de mort, la cornue, l'ibis, la malle, le rat, le balai, le chat. . . . Rien n'est plus *bouffon* que de voir interné dans ce taudis de *chiffonnier-alchimiste* le poète entêté de correction et de dandysme. (The italics are mine.)[16]

Baudelaire's celebrated letter to Ancelle of 18 February 1866 reveals the *cabotin* seemingly in conflict with his own sincerity:

> Faut-il vous dire, à vous qui ne l'avez plus deviné que les autres, que dans ce livre *atroce*, j'ai mis tout mon *coeur*, toute ma *tendresse*, toute ma *religion* (travestie), toute ma haine? Il est vrai que j'écrirai le contraire, que je jurerai mes grands Dieux que c'est un livre d'*art pur*, de *singerie*, de *jonglerie*; et je mentirai comme un arracheur de dents. (*Corr*., II, 610)

The *cabotin manqué*, despite himself, cannot maintain the sufficient detachment required of the *farceur*. Nevertheless, his sentiments are not nakedly presented, but rather costumed in the mask of travesty. The ambiguity of the artist towards his own creation is summed up in the ambivalent tonality of the term "jonglerie": what is suggested in this metaphor is both the ethereal realms of poetry acclaimed by Baudelaire in Poe's *jonglerie*, as well as the critical distanciation of the artist-*cabotin* profoundly aware of the pretention and imposture which undermines artistic creation. "Jonglerie" is thus synonymous with "singerie"; yet it is also a constituent element of "l'art pur."

That *jonglerie* is to be equated with the fine art of imposture becomes evident in the following quotation from Baudelaire's 1856 monograph on Poe, where both the credulity of the reader as well as the naïveté of the author are playfully satirized:

> Des ouvrages de ce singulier génie, j'ai peu de choses à dire; le public fera voir ce qu'il en pense. Il me serait difficile, peut-être, mais non pas impossible de débrouiller sa méthode, d'expliquer son procédé, surtout dans la partie de ses oeuvres dont le principal effet gît dans une analyse bien ménagée. Je pourrais introduire le lecteur dans les mystères de sa fabrication, m'étendre longuement sur cette portion de génie américain qui le fait se réjouir d'une difficulté vaincue, d'une énigme expliquée, d'un tour de force réussi, --qui le pousse à se jouer avec une volupté enfantine et presque perverse dans le monde des probabilités et des conjectures, et à créer des canards auxquels son art subtil a donné une vie vraisemblable. Personne ne niera que Poe ne soit un jongleur merveilleux.[17]

This text should be read in conjunction with the following extract from Baudelaire's projected preface for Les Fleurs du mal, where we witness the cabotin-farceur at play:

> Comment, appuyé sur mes principes et disposant de la science que je me charge de lui enseigner en vingt leçons, tout homme devient capable de composer une tragédie qui ne sera pas plus sifflée qu'une autre, ou d'aligner un poëme de la longueur nécessaire pour être aussi ennuyeux que tout poëme épique connu. (P., 187)

Baudelaire distinguishes, however, this ambivalent form of jonglerie from its pure manifestation in the creative fantasy of the artist:

> . . . Poe avait déjà, à Charlottesville, manifesté une aptitude des plus remarquables pour les sciences physiques et mathématiques. Plus tard il en fera un usage fréquent dans ses étranges contes, et en tirera des moyens très inattendus. Mais j'ai des raisons de croire que ce n'est pas à cet ordre de compositions qu'il attachait le plus d'importance, et que--peut-être même à cause de cette précoce aptitude--il n'était pas loin de les considérer comme faciles jongleries, comparativement aux ouvrages de pure imagination.[18]

Pure jonglerie thus stands in diametric opposition to its bastardized manifestation ("faciles jongleries") in the mechanical construction of the work of art based on scientism. It is important, here, not to confuse scientism on the formal level with scientism on the thematic level. Indeed, whilst Baudelaire refutes the spurious mechanical jugglery of the latter, he realizes, however, that a mathematical jugglery of a different nature is required of the artist-*jongleur*. Pure *jonglerie*, as he explains in his *Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe* of 1857, is of a synthetic nature, consisting in an amalgamation of inspired fantasy with the critical, dissociative faculties of the artist. It is not the arbitrary association of disparate elements, but rather the scientific syncretism of spontaneity with deliberate calculation. Baudelaire thus contrasts the pseudo-*jonglerie* of the enraptured artist with the *bona fide jonglerie* of the conscious, and, moreover, deliberately conscious artist whose spontaneity is, paradoxically, centred on the critical dissection of the mechanisms of art:

> Autant certains écrivains affectent l'abandon, visant au chef-d'oeuvre les yeux fermés, pleins de confiance dans le désordre, et attendant que les caractères jetés au plafond retombent en poèmes sur le parquet, autant Edgar Poe--l'un des hommes les plus inspirés que je connaisse--a mis d'affectation à cacher la spontanéité, à simuler le sang-froid et la délibération. "Je crois pouvoir me vanter--dit-il avec un orgueil amusant et que je ne trouve pas de mauvais goût--qu'aucun point de ma composition n'a été laissé au hasard, et que l'oeuvre entière a marché pas à pas vers son but avec la précision et la logique rigoureuse d'un problème mathématique." Il n'y a, dis-je, que les amateurs de hasard, les fatalistes de l'inspiration et les fanatiques du *vers blanc* qui puissent trouver bizarres ces minuties.[19]

The irony of the *jongleur-farceur* is not limited to a critique of a social or aesthetic nature alone, but extends also to the metaphysical plane, where life becomes a grand masked ball, mankind but dancers in a world of illusion, madly spinning in "le branle universel de la danse macabre" (P., 94), masking their metaphysical anguish in "la fête de la vie" (P., 93). The dance thus symbolizes man's frivolity, his refusal to tear away the veils of illusion and "divertissement" and confront his cosmic nudity:

> Sous une lumière blafarde
> Court, danse et se tord sans raison
> La Vie, impudente et criarde.
> ("La Fin de la journée," P., 121)

A variation on this theme is to be found in "Le Voyage," where the cosmic dance takes on frenzied proportions:

> Nous imitons, horreur! la toupie et la boule
> Dans leur valse et leurs bonds. . . .
> (P., 123)

After the tradition of Pascal, man's reason proves powerless to penetrate the mystery ("Voilà notre état véritable. C'est ce qui nous rend incapables de savoir certainement et d'ignorer absolument. Nous voguons sur un milieu vaste, toujours incertains et flottants, poussés d'un bout vers l'autre; quelque terme où nous pensions nous attacher et nous affermir, il branle, et nous quitte, et si nous le suivons il échappe à nos prises, nous glisse et fuit d'une fuite éternelle," Brunschvicg, 72). The dance represents the limitations of human knowledge, the wild confusion of man's incomprehension of the mystery and absurdity of life:

> Vainement ma raison voulait prendre la barre;
> La tempête en jouant déroutait ses efforts,
> Et mon âme dansait, dansait, vieille gabarre
> Sans mâts, sur une mer monstrueuse et sans bords!
> (P., 84)

Similarly, we find the mad dance of unreason of Baudelaire's "cygne," "avec ses gestes fous" (P., 82), which may be compared with the futile but heroic struggle of man-the-impotent-angel "pirouettant dans les ténèbres" ("L'Irrémédiable," P., 75). That the dance metaphor should be endowed with ontological significance is not surprising, if we remember that the circular contortions of the acrobat symbolized the cyclic nature of life (the wheel of fortune) as well as the motions of the celestial bodies, thus constituting a permanent reminder of the ephemeral nature of man's being.[20] The dance metaphor is also, as shall be demonstrated in the latter sections of this chapter, of central importance to Baudelairian aesthetics.

The aesthetic and social implications of the *jongleur* metaphor are positively confirmed by the liminal texts of *Les Fleurs du mal*, which emphasize these aspects respectively: firstly, the emphatic dedication to Gautier, the "parfait magicien ès lettres françaises"; and secondly, the bitter epigraph from d'Aubigné exposing the "exécrables choses" (P., 1505), the ignoble aspect of life. By this juxtaposition Baudelaire sets up an opposition between the fallibility of man and the infallibility of aesthetic form, between culpable humanity and the "poëte impeccable" (P., 3). Rejecting the facile euphoria of Banville and the Parnassians, Baudelaire avers that it is the function of the artist to attempt a resolution of these opposites, to reveal the *malaise* of modern man, whilst simultaneously negating it via the perfection of aesthetic form. For, as Baudelaire states in his 1859 monograph on Gautier: "Il y a dans le mot, dans le *verbe*, quelque chose de *sacré* qui nous défend d'en faire un jeu de hasard. Manier savamment une langue, c'est pratiquer une espèce de sorcellerie évocatoire. . . . Il y a dans le style de Théophile Gautier une justesse qui ravit, qui étonne et qui fait songer à ces miracles produits dans le jeu par une profonde science mathématique. . . . C'est un des privilèges prodigieux de l'art que l'horrible, artistement exprimé, devienne beauté, et que la douleur rhythmée et cadencée remplisse l'esprit d'une joie calme" (P., 690 and 695). The artist is a mendacious illusionist, the magician par excellence. It is for this reason that the artist may be likened to the acrobat who stands for the aesthetic conquest of terror in his superhuman domination of space. "The circus," writes Tarachow, "offers terror, but pleasure in reassurance against the terror. The terror is dramatically conquered for the spectator by the skill and grace and success of the performers."[21] "L'ivresse de l'art," as Baudelaire illustrates in "Une Mort héroïque," "est plus apte que toute autre à voiler les terreurs du gouffre" (P., 271).

The attempted synthesis of the negative vision with its aesthetic transcendence is translated on the aesthetic plane by what may be termed Baudelaire's verbal jugglery or linguistic farce. If the joyous vitality and lyricism of Banville are characterized by the tropes of hyperbole and apostrophe,[22] the radical ambiguity of the Baudelairian aesthetic universe is transcribed in the recurrent tropes of oxymoron, antithesis and paradox. Baudelaire's use of oxymoron is suggestive of more than the aesthetic transmutation of reality, for in this trope is crystallized Baudelaire's bipolaric metaphysics ("[Les] deux postulations simultanées," P., 1277), as well as his dualistic aesthetics ("Ne suis-je pas un faux accord dans la divine symphonie/Grâce à la vorace Ironie qui me secoue et qui me mord?," P., 74). The essential ambivalence and reversibility in Baudelaire's oxymoron ("aimable pestilence," P., 46; "aimables remords," P., 53; "fangeuse grandeur," P., 27; "grâces sataniques," P., 76; "l'Idéal rongeur," P., 44) reflect the paradoxical nature of his poetic universe which is in a constant state of flux, permanently open to metamorphosis and revision. The antithetical juxtaposition of "spleen" and "idéal" is thus reflected in the ambivalent *décors* (the "ciel-caveau" metaphor in "Spleen IV"; the subtle transmutation of sensual ecstasy into metaphysical anguish through the reinterpretation of the external *décor* in that symbolist poem *avant la lettre*, "Harmonie du soir"), in ambivalent substances (the "philtre-poison" metaphor as, for example, in "Le Vampire," P., 31-32, which characterizes the troubadour-mysogynist nature of Baudelaire), in ambivalent characters (the decadent monarch of "Spleen III," "riche mais impuissant, jeune et pourtant très vieux," P., 70); the "docteur des plus grands" of "Châtiment de l'orgueil" negatively metamorphosed into the "foetus dérisoire," P., 20; the albatross-poet "roi de l'azur," P., 9, become gauche and maladroit; the voluptuous vampire turned "outre aux flancs gluants, toute pleine de pus!" in "Les Métamorphoses du vampire," P., 143; the revelation of the "monstre bicéphale" beneath the graceful statue in "Le Masque," P., 22), and finally in ambivalence of action ("un monde où l'action n'est pas la soeur du rêve," "Le Reniement de Saint Pierre," P., 115). The triumph of aesthetic transmutation lies not so much in the resolution of the antagonism between formal perfection and thematic dolorism, but rather in the reflection of this tension in the language of the poetry itself. The protean text, with its motley resonances on the psychic, the aesthetic, the metaphysical and the linguistic levels, is, ultimately, a magnificent *jonglerie*.

That Baudelaire associated the artist with the image of the *jongleur* is quite explicit in several poems where the artist is presented in the guise of the "psyle," a sub-species of the *jongleur*, as Bescherelle indicates in his definition of the term in the *Dictionnaire universel de la langue française* of 1845-1847:

> Chez les Indiens, espèce de magiciens qui font surtout profession de guérir, et expliquent les présages et les songes. Parmi leurs prestiges, on les voit jouer avec des serpents qui ne leur font aucun mal.[23]

In his letter to Jules Janin of 1865, Baudelaire states quite categorically the affinities of the poet with the "psyle":

> Pourquoi le poëte ne serait-il pas un broyeur de poisons aussi bien qu'un confiseur, un éleveur de serpents pour miracles et spectacles, un psyle [sic] amoureux de ses reptiles, et jouissant des caresses glacées de leurs anneaux en même temps que des terreurs de la foule. (P., 806)

This passage, which is echoed, in Greek this time, in *Mon Coeur mis à nu* (XIX, 32, P., 1283) is taken from Elien's *Histoire des animaux* (IX, 62). Poetry, according to Baudelaire, may be likened to a poisonous reptile, terrifying, fascinating, but ultimately beautiful, because poetry is equally monstrous in its depiction of "les exécrables choses" and equally spectacular and fascinating in its aesthetic transmutation of the latter:

> Je veux ensevelir au linceul de la rime
> Ce souvenir, malaise immense qui m'opprime.
> ("Lento")[24]

Whilst the glacial caress of art suggests the impossibility of aesthetic slumber, it also reveals the partially consummate rapture of the artist as he relishes his dolor (". . . je ne conçois guères [mon cerveau serait-il un miroir ensorcelé?] un type de Beauté où il n'y ait du Malheur," Fusées, P., 1255). The poetic reptile is a new kind of "fleur du mal." The lurid and alluring fascination of art again finds expression in the prose poem "Les Tentations ou Eros, Plutus et la gloire," where the serpent metaphor ("un serpent chatoyant," P., 259), much as in the Janin example, is interwoven with the theme of exhibitionism ("debout comme sur une estrade," ibid.).

The juxtaposition of poet and snake appears also in the following lines from "La Lune offensée," first published in L'Artiste of 1 March 1862:

> Vois-tu . . .
> Le poëte buter de front son travail?
> Ou sous les gazons secs s'accoupler les vipères?
> (P., 174)

The "vipères" are unquestionably associated with poetic endeavour: in this highly condensed metaphor is expressed the poet's eternal combat against creative sterility ("gazons secs") despite the knowledge that the brilliant child of his creation will be ultimately venomous ("vipères").

A variation on this theme may be found in the dream described in the letter to Charles Asselineau of 13 March 1856. The points of comparison are the fairground exhibitionism, the serpentine appendage attached to the monster, and the ultimate identification of the poet with the monster, as he wakes up in the contorted pose of the latter:

> C'est un monstre né dans la maison et qui se tient éternellement sur un piédestal. . . . Il y a . . . quelque chose de noirâtre qui tourne plusieurs fois

> autour de ses membres, comme un gros serpent. Je lui demande ce que c'est; il me dit que c'est un appendice monstrueux qui lui part de la tête, quelque chose d'élastique comme du caoutchouc, et si long, si long, que, s'il le roulait sur sa tête comme une queue de cheveux, cela serait beaucoup trop lourd et impossible à porter. . . . Voilà plusieurs années qu'il est obligé de se tenir dans cette salle, sur ce piédestal, par la curiosité du public. . . . Je n'ose pas le toucher, mais je m'intéresse à lui. . . . Je me réveille fatigué, brisé, moulu par le dos, les jambes, les hanches. Je présume que je dormais dans la position contournée du monstre.
> (Corr., I, 340-341)

Here, the poetry, symbolized in the "gros serpent," is visually portrayed as being an intrinsic, even if onerous, element of the poet's make-up. The poisonous fascination of the Janin metaphor, whilst still subtly present, is now transmuted into the heavy obligation weighing upon the poet. The monster, with his cumbersome appendage, is a new kind of albatross ("Ses ailes de géant l'empêchent de marcher," P., 10). It is important to remember that this dream occurred just before the publication of Les Fleurs du mal and the Histoires extraordinaires. The onus is also suggestive of the basic necessity on the part of the poet to externalize his poetry, to alleviate himself of this burden, and also the potentially suicidal impact of poetry on the poet due to his incapacity to fully achieve this ("s'il le roulait sur sa tête comme une queue de cheveux, cela serait beaucoup trop lourd et absolument impossible à porter"). Counterbalancing the negative associations, we have suggested in the elasticity of the appendage, in its serpentine suppleness, the tortuous vagaries of the poetic imagination. The sexual implications of the serpent metaphor are particularly relevant in this context, as Butor[25] explains, inasmuch as literature is coterminous with sexuality ("Mais le génie n'est que l'enfance retrouvée à volonté, l'enfance douée maintenant, pour s'exprimer, d'organes virils et de l'esprit analytique qui lui permet d'ordonner la somme de matériaux involontairement amassée," Le Peintre de la vie moderne, P., 1159). It is important to note that the appendage of the monster emanates from his head, thus reinforcing the cerebral nature of both literature and sexuality.

In his preface to Les Petits Poèmes en prose addressed to Arsène Houssaye, Baudelaire once again equates literature, "cette tortueuse fantaisie," with the image of the "serpent":

> Enlevez une vertèbre, et les deux morceaux de cette tortueuse fantaisie se rejoindront sans peine. . . . Dans l'espérance que quelques-uns de ces tronçons seront assez vivants pour vous plaire et vous amuser, j'ose vous dédier le serpent tout entier. (P., 229)

Here, the serpent metaphor designates the fragmented structure of the prose poems, each segment being endowed with a life of its own, as well as the rhythmic undulations of poetic rêverie ("assez souple et assez heurtée pour s'adapter aux mouvements lyriques de l'âme, aux ondulations de la rêverie," ibid.). The affinities of the serpent metaphor with the notion of "Le Thyrse," which Baudelaire develops primarily in the prose poem of the same name, are, as we shall see, particularly significant.

Specific mention of the "psyle" as jongleur is found in "Le Voyage," first published in La Revue Française of 10 April 1859, where the serpentine cajolerie of the previous image is echoed:

> Nous avons salué des idoles à trompe;
> . . . .
> Des femmes dont les dents et les ongles sont teints,
> Et des jongleurs savants que le serpent caresse.
> (P., 125)

What is important here is the context of the "jongleurs," placed in amongst the meaningless freaks, the cheap attractions of man's curiosity. The parallels with the social position of the Romantic artist are quite evident.

The "jongleur savant" reappears in the guise of the "jongleur sacré" (P., 27) in the poem, "Avec ses vêtements," first published in La Revue Française of 20 April 1857. Although Turnell[26] admits Baudelaire's fascination with snake charmers and jugglers, he feels, however, that there is no compelling psychological reason for this election, and thus assumes that he simply shared the taste of his age for oriental bric-à-brac. The image of the glacial caress is taken up again in "Avec ses vêtements":

> Avec ses vêtements ondoyants et nacrés,
> Même quand elle marche on croirait qu'elle danse,
> Comme ces longs serpents que les jongleurs sacrés
> Au bout de leurs bâtons agitent en cadence.
> (P., 27)

Like the "serpent" and like the poem itself in its attempt to solidify emotional states, the woman is both "ondoyante" and "nacrée": the image of the slow lilting movement of the woman's skirts (it is important to note the distanciation here, for it is not the woman herself who is perpetrating the action, but rather the movement is transposed onto her apparel) contrasts sharply with the suggestion of stiffness in the epithet "nacré." The image of the statuesque-serpentine-woman stands for the paradoxical elements inherent in artistic creation, the transformation of feeling into form. One might compare the subtle blend of inviting animation and glacial hardness (as suggested in the references to precious stones, metals and minerals) with a similar blend of sensuousness and sterility in "Les Bijoux." Undoubtedly influenced by the statuesque concept of Beauty hailed by the Parnassians (cf. "La Beauté" and "Le Fou et la Vénus"), Baudelaire viewed the medium of sculpture as epitomizing the tensions between the fluidity of sentiment and the fixity of form. Baudelaire thus describes the transfiguration or "solemnisation" of lyric poetry in statuary terms in his Salon de 1859:

> De même que la poésie lyrique ennoblit tout, même la passion, la sculpture, la vraie, solennise tout, même le mouvement; elle donne à tout ce qui est humain quelque chose d'éternel et qui participe de la dureté de la matière employée. La colère devient calme, la tendresse sévère, le rêve ondoyant et brillanté de la peinture se transforme en méditation solide et obstinée.
> (P., 1087-1088)

The statuesque-serpentine-woman thus embodies the profoundly antithetical elements inherent in the amalgam of art, at once caressing and glacial, inviting and repelling.

The theme of the serpentine woman is taken up again in "Le Serpent qui danse," composed probably in 1856 (although an earlier date of composition has been suggested: 1842-1848). The jongleur-"psyle" image is here implied. Rhythmic sensuality, as in the previous poem, predominates, finding its development in the harmonics of the ship metaphor,[27] vividly translated in the serpentine structure of the poem itself, modulating between the five and the eight syllable line, very different from the sonnet form of the previous poem:

> A te voir marcher en cadence,
> Belle d'abandon,
> On dirait un serpent qui danse
> Au bout d'un bâton.
> (P., 28)

Visual spectacle ("miroiter la peau") fuses once again with an overpowering sense of rhythm ("une étoffe vacillante"; "comme un fin vaisseau qui roule," P., 29) as the serpentine undulations of the sensuous woman become the lilting caress of the waves. Fascinating, rhythmically alive, both the serpent and the ship metaphors stand for "la sorcellerie évocatoire" (P., 690) of aesthetic transmutation based on harmony and symmetry, rhythm and structure ("La douleur rhythmée et cadencée," P., 695).

The primarily visual nature of the serpentine spectacle is what is accentuated in Baudelaire's usage of this metaphor in his Salon de 1846, where he likens the imaginative eccentricities of fashion to the mysterious and colourful patterns of the "serpent"--eccentricities all the more laudable in an age given over to the drab and dreary fashion of wearing black, the symbol of democratic egalitarianism:

> Une livrée uniforme témoigne de l'égalité; et quant aux eccentriques que les couleurs tranchées et violentes dénonçaient facilement aux yeux, ils se contentent aujourd'hui des nuances dans le dessin, dans la coupe, plus encore que dans la couleur. Ces plis grimaçants, et jouant comme des serpents autour d'un chair mortifié, n'ont-ils pas leur grâce mystérieuse? (P., 951)

In "A une madone," published in La Causerie of 22 January 1860, the jongleur image takes on a very different tonality, as the jongleur, in the form of the knife-thrower, takes on the rôle of the executioner as he sacriligiously destroys the madonna of his own creation. Although this poem is usually interpreted from the psychoanalytical and autobiographical points of view--the sadistic attitude towards the madonna translating the poet's feelings of rage and jealousy at Marie Daubrun's infidelity with Banville--I feel that its significance lies, rather, in the aesthetic allegory portrayed. The whole of the drama, which may be subdivided into two acts, takes place in the poet's heart: indeed, the poem begins and ends with the image of the heart ("le coin le plus noir de mon coeur" parallels the final lines: "Je les planterai dans ton coeur pantelant,/Dans ton Coeur sanglotant, dans ton coeur ruisselant!," P., 55-56). From the outset, it is clear that what is being presented is the psychological state of the author ("un autel souterrain au fond de ma détresse," P., 55), his attempt to seek refuge from the "regard moqueur" (ibid.) of the world, in the darkest recesses of his heart. The sumptuous, gongoric style is more than a facile imitation of the Spanish baroque: rather, it mirrors the precious construction ("tout mon art diligent," P., 56), on the part of the poet, of the artificial and dazzling aesthetic object ("une niche d'azur et d'or tout émaillée," ibid.), the fiery savagery of sensorial experience being tempered by the refined *préciosité* of the medium, thus allowing for the distanciation from the primal experience in its transmutation into the work of art.

In fact, the whole work is punctuated with references to aesthetic fabrication, whether in the form of the Parnassian artist-sculptor ("Avec mes Vers polis, treillis d'un pur métal/Savamment constellé de rimes de cristal," ibid.) or in the form of the satanic artist-demiurge ("le serpent qui me mord les entrailles," ibid.). The statue of the madonna, indeed, represents the work of art, that is to say the aesthetic synthesis of the poet's psychological state, his jealousy, his desires, his adoration, his humility, with its aesthetic transmutation into a kind of jewelled artefact. The reverent "assembling" of the madonna is paralleled by the violent, sacriligious profanation of the latter in the sadistic finale. If, as I believe, the madonna symbolizes art, and in turn the poet himself, in his relationship to art, the poem is a re-statement of the "héautontimorouménos" principle: the poet, as Romantic ironist, is both the "executioner" of himself and of his art:

> Bourreau plein de remords, je ferai sept Couteaux
> Bien affilés, et comme un jongleur insensible,
> Prenant le plus profond de ton amour pour cible,
> Je les planterai tous dans ton coeur pantelant,
> Dans ton Coeur sanglotant, dans ton Coeur ruisselant!
> (ibid.)

The final stabbing of the madonna transfixes his own heart: it is the paroxysmic transmutation of feeling into form. The conceit itself is pierced with irony, for what is evoked is not two hearts transfixed by Cupid's arrow, a symbol which stands for union and fruitfulness, but the destructive negation of the Self and of Art in this spurious union. The image of the "jongleur insensible" admirably summarizes that extraordinary amalgam of ardour and insensitivity which is the _sine qua non_ of aesthetic creation. The aesthetic _jonglerie_ stands for more than the technical expertise required of the creator of the "belle orfèvrerie de décadence"[28]: indeed, the _jongleur_ image embodies an aesthetic credo: it is the plenary symbol of the dualistic and "duel-istic" impulses inherent in the creative act.

The image of the serpent associated with the magician's _bâton_ which appears in the _jongleur_ metaphor, finds its development in the notion of the _thyrse_, in which Baudelaire describes the straight line around which the curved one glides. The thyrsus, a straight stick along which flowers and branches twisted sinuously, was the emblem of Dionysus. The image of the serpent, as Chevalier and Gheerbrant point out, is closely associated with the Dionysian cult, which appeared at a moment when literary perfection was at its apogee in Greece. "Ainsi," continue Chevalier and Gheerbrant, "le Grand Libérateur apparaît historiquement au moment où, avec la perfection de l'écrit, s'instaure dans la cité le triomphe du Logos hellénique."[29] Baudelaire's analysis of the thyrsus symbol will be in terms of the Dionysian-Apollonian dialectic.

The theme of the thyrsus which at length becomes embodied in the celebrated prose poem addressed to Liszt was treated variously from 1856 to 1866.[30] It was around the time of signing the contract with Poulet-Malassis and De Broise for the first edition of Les Fleurs du mal, that Baudelaire took up the symbol of the caduceus, the trademark of his publishers, to describe the rhythmical cadence of woman's gait in "Avec ses vêtements ondoyants et nacrés" and in "Le Serpent qui danse" (both published for the first time in 1857). In 1860, the thyrsus symbol is specifically mentioned by name in Baudelaire's paraphrase of De Quincey's metaphor of the thyrsus.[31] The prose poem of the same name was published in La Revue Nationale of 10 December 1863 and constitutes a paean to the great composer. Baudelaire had already witnessed the application of the thyrsus symbol to music in Le Neveu de Rameau,[32] which he warmly praises in a letter to his mother of 13 December 1862.

The thyrsus becomes, in the prose poem, the very symbol of poetry itself: the interplay of straight and curving lines is no less than a graphic formulation of the poetic act, standing for the amiably antagonistic elements which comprise it. The thyrsus thus symbolizes the rigid control of the artist over the sinuous products of his imagination:

> Le bâton, c'est votre volonté, droite, ferme et inébranlable; les fleurs, c'est la promenade de votre fantaisie autour de votre volonté. (P., 285)

Given the sexual implications of the serpent metaphor, it is not surprising that the thyrsus should stand for the androgynous aspect of poetry, for the marriage of the imaginative feminine element in art, with its analytical male counterpart:

> . . . c'est l'élément féminin exécutant autour du mâle ses prestigieuses pirouettes. (ibid.)

These lines should be read in conjunction with Baudelaire's earlier development of this theme in *Le Peintre de la vie moderne* (written some time between November 1859 and February 1860, although published much later in *Le Figaro* of 26 and 29 November, and 3 December 1863), where Baudelaire outlines how infantile perception, which he equates with the imaginative faculty of the artist, is brought under the *bâton* of masculine *volontarisme*:

> . . . le génie n'est que *l'enfance retrouvée* à volonté, l'enfance douée maintenant, pour s'exprimer, d'organes virils et de l'esprit analytique qui lui permet d'ordonner la somme de matériaux involontairement amassée.
> (P., 1159)

Although the feminine element is a constituent part of the creative act, it only finds relevance in its dialectical relationship with its masculine counterpart.

Not only does the thyrsus express the duality of art in the shape of its concentrated diffusion, its potent androgyneity, its absolute relativity ("Le beau est fait d'un élément éternel, invariable . . . et d'un élément relatif, circonstanciel," P., 1154), but it also comes to symbolize a duality of another sort in the shape of the sacred ("un emblème sacerdotal," P., 284) and magical dance of poetic language ("la sinuosité du verbe," P., 285) in its Dionysian abandonment of its stereotyped idiom. This frenzy finds expression in the Terpsichorean muse ("un mystique fandango," ibid.; "prestigieuses pirouettes," ibid.). The thyrsus implies the dialectic in operation between language as fixed structure, with its permanent substratum of meaning, and language as plurisignification, as incandescent invitation to the dance: "Le paradoxe fondamentale de la littérature," writes Starobinski, "est d'être une fête (ou une profanation) du langage, c'est-à-dire une *relation avivée*--par le moyen de la transposition 'élocutoire,' qui implique l'émergence, libre et autonome, de l'élément du langage pur, et par conséquent une *relation suspendue*. Que le mot, que la phrase s'isolent dans leur substance propre, au lieu de nous solliciter comme le fait un message direct, voilà qui interrompt le souci de nos intérêts immédiats, pour instaurer un intérêt d'un ordre différent, lié à la dépense imaginaire."[33] Walking the tightrope between ordinary language and its almost electrically charged poetic counterpart, the poet, in his creative synthesis of the latter through his linguistic *jonglerie*, is the *funambule par excellence*. Rimbaud, in his *Illuminations*, admirably captures the Terpsichorean essence of the poetic "fête":

> J'ai tendu des cordes de clocher à clocher; des guirlandes de fenêtre à fenêtre; des chaînes d'or d'étoile à étoile, et je danse.[34]

It is not without significance that the *funambule* metaphor is itself of an ambivalent nature: implied therein is both the *volontarisme*, the perfect *maîtrise* of the consummate artist, as well as the precarious totterings à la Tiepolo of the artist *manqué*.

On a different plane, the harmonic cadence of the undulating line expresses not a linguistic "vibrativité," but reveals a grand network of cosmic resonances. The "dessin arabesque" (P., 1250), with its perpetual rhythm and motion celebrates the inexhaustible vitality at the heart of the universe where everything interrelates in a kind of electric magnetism: "Tout," writes Baudelaire in his monograph on Hugo, published in *La Revue Fantaisiste* of 1861, "forme mouvement, nombre, couleur, parfum, dans le *spirituel* comme dans le *naturel* est significatif, réciproque, converse, correspondant" (P., 705). With his luminous imagination which opens up for him the "universelle analogie" (ibid.), the poet resembles the Fool who also bespeaks a visionary aperception of life, and, as Collins explains, is the very symbol of poetic consciousness in a technological age:

> The crucifixion of the poetic imagination in man by the Machine Age, is a religious fact. And modern society has succeeded very well in rendering poetic imagination . . . an heresy; and the living symbol of the heresy is the Fool. The Fool is the poetic imagination of life.[35]

On the moral plane, Baudelaire's arabesque (see Appendix C), in which his synaesthetic vision of the universe is transcribed in the notion of rhythmic "vibrativité," expresses a spiritual release from the familiar Baudelairian universe heavy with sin and self-loathing.

It thus becomes a symbol of joyful vitality, an intense type of cosmic consciousness. This other Baudelairian universe is essentially a dynamic and ebullient one. Baudelaire's definition of the "surnaturel," suggests precisely this notion of amplified existence with its infinite reverberations. "Le naturel," Baudelaire notes in Fusées, "comprend la couleur générale et l'accent, c'est-à-dire intensité, sonorité, limpidité, vibrativité, profondeur et retentissement dans l'espace et dans le temps" (P., 1256). Metamorphosed in the crucible of "cette reine des facultés" (P., 1037), the external world takes on a "frisson nouveau" as the artist taps, as it were, the energy of life. To quote Poulet:

> C'est par un frisson que tout commence chez Baudelaire. A de certaines heures . . . les objets se trouvent soudain parés de couleurs plus vives, doués d'un relief singulier, d'une résonance aiguë. . . . Une extrême énergie fait frémir les choses. Elles chatoient, résonnent, trépident. Elles ne se contentent plus d'être, elles se mettent à vivre. . . . Tous les objets sont touchés et exaltés par un pouvoir non translateur, mais transfiguraateur, qui les métamorphose là où ils sont, sur place.[36]

Analytical impressionism similarly dominates Baudelaire's description of "la grande symphonie du jour" (P., 881); here, the essence of the "surnaturel" is conveyed by the decomposition of the infinite vibrations of heat and light:

> Supposons un bel espace de nature où tout verdoie, rougeoie, poudroie et chatoie en pleine liberté, où toutes choses, diversement colorées suivant leur constitution moléculaire, changées de seconde en seconde par le déplacement de l'ombre et de la lumière, et agitées par le travail intérieur du calorique, se trouvent en perpétuelle vibration, laquelle fait trembler les lignes et complète la loi du mouvement éternel et universel. . . . Les arbres sont verts, les gazons verts, les mousses vertes; le vert serpente dans les troncs... (P., 880)

The serpent metaphor could, indeed, be extended to apply to the whole eurhythmics of Baudelaire's synaesthetic universe, whether the correspondences be interpreted on the vertical or the horizontal plane. This theoretical passage finds its poetic transposition in "La Chevelure," first published in La Revue Française of 20 May 1859, with its euphoric riot of perfumes, sounds and colours:

> Un port retentissant où mon âme peut boire
> A grands flots le parfum, le son et la couleur;
> Où les vaisseaux, glissant dans l'or et dans la moire,
> Ouvrent leurs vastes bras pour embrasser la gloire
> D'un ciel pur où frémit l'éternelle chaleur.
> (P., 25)

In the dance of the arabesque line with its incessantly moving contours, motion is a decisive element. The line, whilst essentially geometric, is not static for Baudelaire, but fluid, multiplying and expanding in sinuous undulations. It is because of Baudelaire's kinaesthetic perception of line, that he can differentiate between matter as mass and matter as line, the two being in no way synonymous ("Car la forme est indépendante de la matière, et ce ne sont pas les molécules qui constituent la forme," P., 1298). Anticipating the successive perspectives of the cubists, Baudelaire translates the concrete qualities of mass into fluid linear symmetry in his striking description of ships gently rocked by the motion of the waves.[37] This kinaesthetic perspective may be likened to the superimposition of successive shots taken with a camera, or to a similar technique employed in the "phénakisticope" (P., 528) which seems to have fascinated Baudelaire:

> Je crois que le charme infini et mystérieux qui gît dans la contemplation d'un navire, et surtout d'un navire en mouvement, tient, dans le premier cas, à la régularité et à la symétrie qui sont un des besoins primordiaux de

> l'esprit humain, au même degré que la complication et l'harmonie, --et, dans le second cas, à la multiplication successive et à la génération de toutes les courbes et figures imaginaires opérées dans l'espace par les éléments réels de l'objet. (P., 1261)

The constituent elements of the "thyrse" are again evident in the stress on symmetry, not in its rigid mathetmatical formula, but rather in its imaginative application ("la génération de toutes les courbes et figures imaginaires"). Indeed, Baudelaire's kinaesthetic perception as conveyed in the ship metaphor may be considered as a kind of ars poetica, for poetry too requires the creation of a fantastic network of associations in its transcendence of matter, whether on the syntagmatic or paradigmatic levels.

If we consult Baudelaire's notes for the second preface to Les Fleurs du mal, one cannot doubt but that Baudelaire envisaged poetry in terms of a kinaesthetic geometry:

> Que la phrase poëtique peut imiter (et par là elle touche à l'art musical et à la science mathématique) la ligne horizontale, la ligne droite ascendante, la ligne droite descendante; qu'elle peut monter à pic vers le ciel, sans essoufflement, ou descendre perpendiculairement vers l'enfer avec la vélocité de toute pesanteur; qu'elle peut suivre la spirale, décrire la parabole, ou le zigzag figurant une série d'angles superposés. (P., 186)

Poetry has definite affinities with the dance: poetic language is conceived of by Baudelaire as a fantastic, but geometric pirouette. The arabesque of poetic language is complemented by the rigorous discipline of poetic gymnastics. The "extase volontaire" of the "thyrse" metaphor reappears, as we shall see in the latter half of this chapter, in the antithetical metaphors of "la danse" and "la gymnastique."

Cosmic and linguistic vibrativity are complemented by what may be termed emotional vibrativity: the physical vibrations of sound and light become the objective correlatives for emotional states (what Artaud might term "l'athlétisme affectif")[38]; hence the superabundant usage of terms such as "vibrer," "frémir," "retentir," "tourbillonner," "voltiger" and "scintiller" to translate the vibrations of the soul. "Harmonie du soir," first published in La Revue Française of 20 April 1857, clearly illustrates the correlation between these different levels of perturbation. This quasi-elegiac pantoum written in the symbolist manner, reveals, through its deliberately blurred effect, the subtle inter-relationships between sensations and emotions of different orders. Perfumes, sounds and colours merge into the movement of the dance ("valse mélancolique," P., 45). Indeed, the pantoum itself, with its melodic repetitions, is suggestive of the dance. The delicate oscillations ("vibrant sur sa tige"; "les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir"; "le violon frémit"), "les arabesques de la fantaisie" (P., 1147) are, however, counterbalanced to some extent by certain images of concentration and fixity, such as the luminous concentration of the past condensed in the metaphor of the congealed sun. Expressed in this antithesis is, as J.-P. Richard[39] explains, the Baudelairian attempt to penetrate the latent structure of the material universe: hence the opposition between the fecund profundity of the open "corresponding" universe, and the hermetic impenetrability of matter as simple molecular structure. The systole-diastole motion between fixity and fluidity admirably captures the dialectic inherent in poetic language which, as we have noted, is in a perpetual state of dépassement. Yet even the poetic excavations of language can in no way assure a true approximation of the thing expressed; indeed, the very transfixing of what is being expressed is in itself heretical. "Toute expression," writes Richard, "est aussi une diminution, Baudelaire dit une 'prostitution' de la chose exprimée."[40] Poetic language can in no way embody its content: it thus remains in a state of permanent suspension, of fixed fluidity. It is precisely this antinomial ambiguity which is reflected in the symmetrically undulating properties of the arabesque which, whilst being suggestive of the "corresponding" multi-verse, is also redolent of a certain fixity. Like the ship's tracery of lines, at one and the same time motion and structured architecture, the arabesque symbolizes the paradoxical notion of fluid inertia ("le repos, avec le spectacle du mouvement," "Anywhere our of the World," P., 304). "Le dessin arabesque est le plus idéal de tous" (P., 1250).[41]

Jankélévitch, in his brilliant study entitled L'Ironie, analyses the stylistic acrobatics of the funambulesque poet in quest of the deus absconditus within language. The arabesque nature of poetic language could not be more neatly defined:

> Nous savons déjà capter les ondes mystérieuses qui cernent chaque mot, qui le rendent suggestif et inégal à lui-même. . . . La double trahison du langage, à la fois appauvrissant et déformant, exalte encore davantage notre imagination. . . . L'esprit supplée, corrige, interpole, perçoit enfin cette ponctuation secrète qui est au-delà de la phrase visible et qui est à celle-ci comme la musique des sphères, selon les Pythagoriens, aux mouvements astronomiques. "Evoquer, dans une ombre exprès, par des mots allusifs, jamais directs, se réduisant à du silence égal. . .": ainsi s'exprime Stéphane Mallarmé, prêtre de l'occulte et théoricien de l'hermétisme. Seul le géomètre, écrivait Alain, ne dit que ce qu'il dit; le poète ne dit pas ce qu'il dit, dit ce qu'il ne dit pas, tantôt plus, tantôt moins, autre chose enfin! Pourtant ce sont

> encore des mots qui servent à nous faire oublier les mots; pour volatiliser la matière, il nous faut d'abord accepter la matière, et l'artiste le sait bien, qui s'installe dans le monde des corps figurés. En cela consiste sans doute l'acrobatie du "style"; à tout moment nous devinons, derrière la lettre, la secrète respiration de l'esprit, et à tout moment le poids de la lettre risque de nous retenir au sol. Pour lire ce qui n'est pas écrit, pour entendre ce qui n'est pas proféré, il faut que le silence se peuple. Nous dansons ainsi sur une corde tendue entre le trop et le trop peu, entre l'esprit famélique qui a voulu s'envoler d'un seul coup et l'esprit beau parleur à qui les mots ont fait oublier le sens.[42]

The fantasies of the arabesque find their complement in the dance metaphor, which thoroughly permeates the Baudelairian universe. If the dance metaphor is considered in terms of its linguistic application as elucidated by Valéry[43] in Poésie et pensée abstraite, the affinities between poetry and dance become quite evident. In attempting to identify the special character and value of poetry by distinguishing it as language, as opposed to other kinds of discourse, summarized under the heading of prose, Valéry makes the analogy between prose and walking on the one hand, and poetry and dancing on the other. Just as dancing is essentially a fantastic mode of walking, or, to be more precise, a dépassement, so poetry is equally transcendental in its dépassement of everyday, prosaic language.

Dance, with its subtle blend of grace and beauty, its carefully designed symmetry and skill, was, in fact, for Baudelaire, the perfect symbol of poetry:

> Chez nous, l'on méprise trop l'art de la danse. . . . La danse peut révéler tout ce que la musique recèle de mystérieux, et elle a de plus le mérite d'être humaine et palpable. La danse, c'est la poésie avec des bras et des jambes, c'est la matière, gracieuse et terrible, animée, embellie par le mouvement. Terpsichore est une Muse du midi; je présume qu'elle était très brune, et qu'elle a

> souvent agité ses pieds dans les blés dorés; ses mouvements, pleins d'une cadence précise, sont autant de divins motifs pour le statuaire. (P., 505-506)

Baudelaire likens poetry to dance because both are concerned with the vivification of primary matter, both are dealing with basic units which must be rearranged, recharged, aesthetically synthesized. Foreshadowing somewhat Valéry's analogy between poetry and dance, Baudelaire conceives of poetry as metamorphosed matter, or, to be more precise, as the kinaesthetic metamorphosis of primary matter ("la matière . . . embellie par le mouvement," P., 505): poetry, like the dance, achieves "l'acte pur des métamorphoses,"[44] as the vibrations of the word are made to resonate to a new harmonics.

If Baudelaire insists so much on the material nature of the poetic dance, its being-as-matter, which, for him, renders the ethereal évasion of dance superior to the abstract rêveries of music, it is because dance achieves the elusive synthesis of form and content to which the poet aspires. Whereas the painter works with canvas and oils or the composer with musical notes, the dancer actually creates with his own body: he is his own creation: he in-corporates the idea. The religious dances of antiquity were, we remember, the celebration of unity with the godhead, the supreme identification of creator and creation.[45] The essential coincidence of art and artist does not pertain to the art of the dance alone, but is also achieved in mime, which itself may be considered a sub-category of the dance. It is perhaps because the art of the mime and the dancer come nearer to embodying the mystical synthesis of form and idea, that Baudelaire chooses to portray the Muse in the form of the dancer, as, for example, in La Fanfarlo or Amina Boschetti. In this context, one might consider his interest in the celebrated dancer of the forties and fifties, Marie Daubrun, as well as the verses addressed to Lola de Valence, which were placed alongside Manet's famous canvas of the dancer. The dancer exemplifies, moreover, the notion of symmetrical or geometrical harmony ("une cadence précise," P., 506). The dancer is none other than the "thyrse" become flesh and blood ("humaine et palpable," P., 505), the marble statue come to life ("ses mouvements . . . sont autant de divins motifs pour la statuaire," P., 505-506).

In Le Poëme du haschisch, Baudelaire further elucidates his concept of the terpsichorean nature of poetic language. "La danse grammaticale" (Plans et projets, P., 519) is specifically compared with the hypnotic transport of the hashish taker: just as the drug-induced artificial paradise gilds external reality with a magic patina, so a similar kind of sorcery is practised by the poet-thaumaturge as he reveals the particular magic ("la sorcellerie évocatoire," P., 376) contained within language:

> Le haschisch s'étend alors sur toute la vie comme un vernis magique; il la colore en solennité et en éclaire toute la profondeur. . . . --profondeur de l'espace, allégorie de la profondeur du temps, --la danse, le geste ou la déclamation des comédiens, si vous êtes au théâtre, --la première phrase venue, si vos yeux tombent sur un livre, --tout enfin, l'universalité des êtres se dresse devant vous avec une gloire nouvelle non soupçonné jusqu'alors. La grammaire, l'aride grammaire elle-même, devient quelque chose comme une sorcellerie évocatoire; les mots ressuscitent revêtus de chair et d'os, le substantif, dans sa majesté substantielle, l'adjectif, vêtement transparent qui l'habille et le colore comme un glacis, et le verbe, ange du mouvement, qui donne le branle à la phrase. (P., 376)

Art is an artificial paradise,[46] and as such may be compared to the creation of illusion operated by the actor with his multiplied existence--hence Baudelaire's analogy with the theatre. "L'acteur," writes Barthes, "porte en lui un monde excessif, comme celui du haschisch."[47] In this context, it might be interesting to compare Camus' definition of "l'homme absurde" in the guise of the protean actor, as he defines him in the Mythe de Sisyphe.[48] Baudelaire associated the artificial paradises not only with the theatre, but more specifically with the "ombres chinoises" of the Théâtre de Séraphin,[49] which epitomized for him the hashish dream with its "vernis magique." For Baudelaire, art is theatrical dance (note the position dance is given by Baudelaire in his enumeration of the equivalents of the altered state of consciousness produced by drugs): language is emphatically substance ("sa majesté substantielle," P., 376); language is firstly given body ("les mots ressuscitent revêtus de chair et d'os," ibid.), then costumed ("l'adjectif, vêtement transparent," ibid.) and finally animated ("le verbe, ange du mouvement, qui donne le branle à la phrase," ibid.). Poetic language, as the embodiment of substance, consists primarily in the costuming and vivification of matter. Poetic language is a masquerade a costumed dance. "La danse," as Baudelaire notes in La Fanfarlo, "c'est la poésie avec des bras et des jambes" (P., 505).

One might note, in parenthesis, Quinet's more animated description of the costumed-artifice-of-language-as-illusion in a work entitled Ahasvérus (1833):

> Bravo! c'est l'art que j'aurais voulu cultiver si on m'eût laissé libre. Darder, en plein soleil, des paroles hupées, habiller de phrases une ombre, un squelette, moins que cela, un rien, le coiffer de rimes, le chausser d'adverbes, le panacher d'adjectifs, le farder de virgules; quelle faculté dans l'homme, monsieur! et songer que tout lui obéit, premièrement, ce qui n'est pas! Se plonger dans l'océan transparent des choses pour y pêcher le ciel, et rapporter au rivage une douzaine de mots polis, luisants, ruisselants.[50]

The poet-_jongleur_ is essentially a professor of fictions, a creator of airy nothingness, an animator of the magic theatre of language ("Pour bâtir dans la nuit mes féeriques palais," "Paysage," P., 78).

The confluence of language, theatre and dance reappears in the following description of the transmutation of sensory experience due to the effects of drugs. Baudelaire is careful to note that the anecdote pertains to what he terms "un tempérament littéraire" (P., 362):

> Quant à la scène, . . . elle était lumineuse, infiniment petite et située loin, très loin, comme au bout d'un immense stéréoscope. Je ne vous dirai pas que j'écoutais les comédiens, vous savez que cela est impossible; de temps en temps ma pensée accrochait au passage un lambeau de phrase, et, semblable à une danseuse habile, elle s'en servait comme d'un tremplin pour bondir dans des rêveries très-lointaines. (P., 364)

It is significant that Baudelaire chooses to illustrate this altered state of consciousness with a theatrical anecdote related to the art of the dance. It is, indeed, the theatre which stimulates another kind of theatre, that is to say the theatre of the mind, with its aesthetic jugglery, its linguistic trampolining. But the theatre, as Lugné-Poe explains, is bipolaric in nature: the ascensional _ivresse_ is counteracted by the gravitational pull towards the leaden earth: "On croyait bondir, s'élancer, on est rivé. Là est l'erreur, le mensonge, la condamnation trop tôt de l'être humain. On est écrasé par la drogue. . . . Le tremplin use l'homme aussi bien que l'élan. Le tremplin du théâtre est un constant sacrifice."[51] Similarly, the ecstatic soaring of the artist onto another plane of existence by means of the linguistic construct that is art, cannot be maintained indefinitely: his aesthetic lies are given the lie. "L'alphabet bariolé" is stripped of its finery to become, once again, language pure and simple.

After describing the fantastic rêveries of the drug-induced state in the section entitled "Le Théâtre de Séraphin," Baudelaire turns moralisateur, condemning the usage of hashish in the following terms:

> Il est temps de laisser de côté toute cette jonglerie et ces grandes marionnettes, nées de la fumée des cerveaux enfantins. N'avons-nous à parler de choses plus graves: des modifications des sentiments humains, et, en un mot, de la morale du haschisch? (P., 372)

Whilst the term jonglerie applies to the previous section detailing the rêveries of the hashish taker, also implied in this term are specific negative connotations which suggest Baudelaire's disapprobation of the drug. Jonglerie is to be associated with fascination, flirtation, as was noted in the "psyle" metaphor, but also with disdain and disparagement, as Baudelaire himself emphasizes in the Poe monograph of 1857.

To continue with the dance metaphor: the terpsichorean nature of poetic language is amply illustrated in the following quotation from the Salon de 1859, where the characters of language are anthropomorphized into dancing "characters." Expressing his relief at finally bringing to a close his review of the Salon, Baudelaire writes:

> Enfin, il m'est permis de proférer l'irrésistible ouf! que lâche avec tant de bonheur tout simple mortel, non privé de sa raté et condamné à une course forcée, quand il peut se jeter dans l'oasis de repos tant espérée depuis longtemps. Dès le commencement, je l'avouerai volontiers, les caractères béatifiques, qui composent le mot FIN apparaissaient à mon cerveau, revêtus de leur peau noire, comme de petits baladins éthiopiens qui exécuteraient la plus aimable des danses de caractère! (P., 1096-1097)

Not only is poetic language a dance on the syntagmatic or paradigmatic level, but also on the syntactical level: the harmonics of the word complement the harmonic structure of the sentence.[52]

On the semantic level, too, poetry approximates the dance. Lamenting the antiquated style and unoriginal content of Jules Janin's Le Gâteau des rois, Baudelaire translates his criticism in the metaphor of the dancer. This article was first published in English by Arthur Symons in 1920:

> Sans doute il faut montrer quelque respect ou du moins quelque compassion reconnaissante pour ce trémoussement infatigable d'une ancienne danseuse: mais, hélas! moyens usés! procédés affaiblis! câlineries fatigantes! Les idées de notre homme sont de vieilles folles qui ont trop dansé, trop montré et trop levé la jambe. (P., 604)

Baudelaire distinguishes, however, between two different types of dance: the linguistic trampolining of the artist embodies, for him, the legitimate form of the dance. This spiritual manifestation of the dance is to be contrasted with the dance in its bastardized, orgiastic form, which is the sad lot of ordinary mortals ("la troupe des humains," P., 387) who cannot aspire to the heights of Olympus other than through a drug-induced trance:

> Je me figure un homme (dirai-je un brahmane, un poëte, ou un philosophe chrétien?) placé sur l'Olympe ardu de la spiritualité; autour de lui les Muses de Raphaël et de Mantegna, pour le consoler de ses longs jeûnes et de ses prières assidues, combinent les danses les plus nobles, le regardent avec leurs plus doux yeux et leurs sourires les

> plus éclatants; le divin Apollon, ce maître en tout savoir (. . . n'y a-t-il pas un Apollon pour tout homme qui le mérite?), caresse de son archet ses cordes les plus vibrantes. Au-dessous de lui, au pied de la montagne, dans les ronces et dans la boue, la troupe des humains, la bande des ilotes simule les grimaces de la jouissance et pousse des hurlements que lui arrache la morsure du poison. (P., 386-387)

The frenzied revelry of the hashish taker in no way resembles the serene world of grace and beauty which is the artist's "jardin de vraie beauté" (P., 387), for the dance of the Muses is presided over by Apollo himself. The contiguity of the Apollo image, with its notion of design and symmetry, with the metaphor of the artist-gymnast is, as we shall see, particularly significant.

The dance symbolizes man's liberation from the material universe, and, as such, is the very embodiment of man's spiritual aspirations.[53] The dancer thus represents a defiance of the mundane level of existence and a reaching out for a more transcendental level of being ("[le] goût de l'infini," P., 387). It is not surprising, therefore, that Baudelaire should choose the metaphor of the dancer's spangled dress to denote the imaginative faculty of the artist:

> On dirait encore une de ces robes étranges de danseuses, où une gaze transparente et sombre laisse entrevoir les splendeurs amorties d'une jupe éclatante, comme sous le noir présent transperce le délicieux passé; et les étoiles vacillantes d'or et d'argent, dont elle est semée, représentent ces feux de la fantaisie qui ne s'allument bien que sous le deuil de la Nuit. (P., 263)

This splendid metaphor, which constitutes the finale of the prose poem "Le Crépuscule du soir," first published in 1855, is part of the summation of the poet's feelings before the approach of night. The fleeting moments of twilight are captured in the muted brilliance of the dancer's dress, which becomes the very symbol of the artist's imagination ("ces feux de la fantaisie"), dazzling, fantastic, yet refined by the subtle veil of opacity. Thus we understand Baudelaire's fascination with the mysterious metamorphosing properties of "le vitre" ("Ce qu'on peut voir au soleil est toujours moins intéressant que ce qui se passe derrière une vitre," "Les Fenêtres," P., 288).

The above quoted passage concerning the dancer should be read in conjunction with Baudelaire's "Epilogue" to the Petits Poèmes en prose, which offers a variation on the theme of the dancer as symbol of the explosive containment of imaginative perception. The poet, standing in proud contemplation of the infernal city, expresses, in the following terms, his complex love for the city of his birth, his "énorme catin" (P., 310):

> Que tu dormes encor dans les draps du matin,
> Lourde, obscure, enrhumée, ou que tu te pavanes
> Dans les voiles du soir passementés d'or fin,
>
> Je t'aime, ô capitale infâme!...
> (P., 310)

The dancer as symbol of poetic rêverie reappears in a poem of Baudelaire's youth entitled "A une jeune saltimbanque." Here, the "fantaisie" is veiled by a sense of infinite longing and imbued with a sense of nostalgic melancholy (". . . quand un poème exquis amène les larmes au bord des yeux, ces larmes ne sont pas la preuve d'un excès de jouissance, elles sont bien plutôt le témoignage d'une mélancolie irritée, d'une postulation des nerfs, d'une nature exilée dans l'imparfait et qui voudrait s'emparer immédiatement, sur cette terre même, d'un paradis révélé")[54]:

> Ta guitare enrouée et ta jupe à paillettes
> Etalaient à nos yeux le rêve des poëtes,
> La danseuse d'Hoffmann, Esmeralda, Mignon.
> (P., 224)

The bohemian implications in the metaphor of the dancer found in the reference to Hugo and Goethe serve to reinforce the poetic vagaries of the artist-as-histrio ("Glorifier le vagabondage et ce qu'on peut appeler le Bohémianisme, culte de la sensation multipliée," Mon Coeur mis à nu, P., 1295).

Variations on the dance motif appear in the metaphors of "le ballet," "la walse," and "le fandango"--all expressive of the positive liberation of the poetic fantasia, an excellent example of which may be found in the poem "A celle qui est trop gaie," which Baudelaire enclosed in an anonymous letter to Madame Sabatier, dated 9 December 1852:

> Les retentissantes couleurs
> Dont tu parsèmes tes toilettes
> Jettent dans l'esprit des poètes
> L'image d'un ballet de fleurs.
> (P., 141)

Paradoxically, the positive aspirations of the dance are sometimes expressed in negative fashion, as, for example, in Baudelaire's celebrated diatribe against the absolute philistinism and total lack of imagination of that sub-human species, "Les Belges" ("C'est l'éléphant, imitant le fandango ou la danse des oeufs," P., 1395). Witness also Baudelaire's excoriating critique of the Belgians' prosaic vulgarity in the poem, classified under the rubric of Les Bouffonneries, "Sur les débuts d'Amina Boschetti": the critique is conveyed in their inability to appreciate the spiritual qualities of the ethereal dancer:

Vous ignorez, sylphide au jarret triomphant
Qui voulez enseigner la walse à l'éléphant,
Au hibou la gaîté, le rire à la cigogne,

Que sur la grâce en feu le Welche dit: "Haro!"
Et que le doux Bacchus lui versant du bourgogne,
Le monstre répondrait: "J'aime mieux le faro!"
(P., 158)

Nor is this inability to ascend to the lofty aesthetic realm limited to the Belgian nation alone: the French bourgeoisie is, according to Baudelaire, equally barbaric: this is clearly illustrated in the fourth episode, the "foire du village," of the prose poem "Les Vocations," first published in Le Figaro of 14 February 1864 ("Ces gens-là ne sentent pas la musique, et leurs femmes dansent comme des ours," P., 283).

The aesthetic *jonglerie* of the poet-thaumaturge is essentially the affirmation of the ludic function of poetry. "La *poièsis*," writes Huizinga, "est une fonction ludique. Elle se situe dans une espace ludique, dans un univers propre que l'esprit se crée, où les choses revêtent un autre aspect que dans la 'vie courante,' et sont reliées entre elles par des liens différents de ceux de la logique."[55] The poet, as Freud[56] has pointed out, resembles the child at play in his capacity to create an illusory world, to suspend reality: both, through their imaginative saltation, find exaltation in their finite creativity, in the magic dimension of illusion for, to quote Nietzsche, "becoming and dissolution, building and destruction without moral implication, in eternal innocence, are to be found in the world only in the play of the artist and of the child."[57]

The poet, however, differs from the child in certain respects, inasmuch as for him the parenthetic suspension of the world is complemented by an equally fragile annulment of the aesthetic universe of his own creation: a double negation is in operation, whereby the ironic consciousness of the artist suspends the illusory aesthetic universe, itself a suspension. It is on account of this reflexive consciousness, as Misrahi explains, that the artist-as-child is no more:

> Dans cette conscience réflexive du joueur lucide on trouve donc la marque de la maturité: par la double négation qu'est la conscience ironique de la conscience joueuse, le sujet veut retrouver le positif qui est son être: le sérieux comme horizon prochain et comme possibilité permanente. C'est la forme de la conscience adulte qui joue avec l'enfant: elle sait qu'elle se retrouvera. Totalement disponible, cette conscience joueuse mais réfléchie sur soi peut à chaque instant briser le cadre formel de jeu et la matière concrète de son affectivité. Le sujet est d'ailleurs conscient de cette disponibilité, ou, plutôt, cette disponibilité est la conscience même de son pouvoir de transmutation. Elle est donc l'horizon de liberté réfléchie qui englobe la liberté légère et facile du jeu. Cette liberté seconde, c'est le propre même de la maturité comme anti-puérilité: c'est l'homme lui-même en tant que sérieux.[58]

It is precisely this capacity for distanciation which permits the artist to incorporate reality into his vision, to make visible and confront the ugliness of life while keeping it from becoming destructive: for the artist is the metteur en scène within the limited, predetermined confines of his illusory world. He is thus at liberty to indulge in the pleasures of aesthetic omnipotence for, as Caillois remarks, "la joie, l'aisance qu'on constate dans l'activité ludique, dérivent de cette sécurité. On sait que les choses n'ont ici que l'importance qu'on leur donne, qu'on ne sera compromis qu'autant qu'on y consent et qu'on a toujours licence de se retirer, dès qu'on le désire. . . . Le jeu n'est pas seulement le lieu d'une perfection limitée et provisoire: il constitue une sorte de havre où l'on est maître du destin. On y choisit soi-même ses risques qui, déterminés à l'avance, ne peuvent pas dépasser ce qu'on est disposé précisément de mettre en jeu."[59] But art is merely an illusion: art is a substitute gratification whose mediatory function between the artist and the world is founded upon existential failure.[60] The omnipotent aesthetic magician ("Architecte de mes féeries," "Rêve Parisien," P., 98) has proved once again to be an impotent martyr on the stage of life.

Baudelaire's "bouffonneries," as we shall see, stand for the ludic rêveries of the artist, and, as such, form part of his general investigation into altered states of consciousness: in this context, one might consider his fascination with Poe, his studies of the "paradis artificiels," his analytical descriptions of the dandy as they relate to the mechanism of the artist's histrionic psyche, or, finally, his speleology of the hieroglyphics of dream states.[61] The "bouffonneries" connote, primarily, the effervescent exaltations of the artist's ludic consciousness, his playful _jonglerie_ with transmuted reality. As for Rimbaud, the poet is, for Baudelaire, the sublime _jongleur_, the conjuror of poetic fantasias:

> Jongleur!
> Blancs, verts, et rouges dioptriques,
> Que s'évadent d'étranges fleurs
> Et des papillons électriques!
> ("Ce qu'on dit au poète à propos des fleurs")[62]

These lines bring to mind Charles Cros' description, in _Le Coffret de santal_, of the magic theatre of the mind that is poetic creation:

> J'ai bâti dans ma fantaisie
> Un théâtre aux décors divers:
> --Magiques palais, grands bois verts--
> Pour y jouer ma poésie.[63]

In Baudelaire, however, more sombre undertones also come into play, for the artist, through his ironic consciousness, both posits and annihilates the magic dimension of illusion: the illusion eludes him: he is literally out of the game. The artist's heightened awareness on the aesthetic plane fuses with his heightened awareness on the cerebral plane, the latter occasioning the decomposition of the former. In keeping with the spirit of irony which permeates the Baudelairian universe, the more intense the illusion, the greater the sense of elusion.

If we consult the following jotting by Baudelaire in Fusées, one cannot doubt but that the "bouffonneries" are to be associated with the magic world of illusion, with the lyrical flights of the poetic imagination:

> Concevoir un canevas pour une bouffonnerie lyrique ou féerique, pour une pantomime, et traduire cela en un roman sérieux. Noyer le tout dans une atmosphère anormale et songeuse, --dans l'atmosphère des grands jours. --Que ce soit quelque chose de berçant, --et même de serein dans la passion. --Régions de la Poésie pure. (P., 1261)

The "bouffonnerie lyrique" may be likened to Fancioulle's pantomime, which, in turn, is reminiscent of the pantomimes-arlequinades-féeriques of the Funambules. But, above all, the "bouffonnerie lyrique" represents that state of hypersensitivity and supernatural exuberance which Baudelaire celebrates so emphatically in his appreciation of Banville's "lyrical" talents, his ability to capture the "belles heures de la vie" (P., 735), what he calls in the Fusées passage "l'atmosphère des grands jours." The "bouffonnerie lyrique" is, in the final analysis, to be equated with pure poetry ("Régions de la Poésie pure"). The epithet "berçant" admirably conveys the fundamental ambivalence of the "bouffonnerie," for implied in the rhythmic undulations of the hypnotic rêverie is the desire of wilful illusion, the substitution of art as a compensatory mechanism, the awareness of the transience of the aesthetic experience born of the knowledge of the dialectical moment.

A variation on the theme of "la bouffonnerie lyrique" may be found in the fantastic and fiery caprices of the Terpsichorean Muse, La Fanfarlo:

> Mais Fanfarlo la catholique, non contente de rivaliser avec Terpsichore, appela à son secours tout l'art des divinités plus modernes. Les brouillards mêlent des formes de fées et d'ondines moins vaporeuses et moins nonchalantes. Elle fut à la fois un caprice de Shakespeare et une bouffonnerie italienne. (P., 506)

"La bouffonnerie," here, stands for a magic, fairy-tale world bathed in the mists of illusion. The reference to Shakespeare is not fortuitous: for the nineteenth century the name of Shakespeare conjured up a will-o'-the-wisp world of unreality, of évasion.

Baudelaire further defines his notion of Italian "bouffonnerie" in Quelques Caricaturistes étrangers, published in Le Présent of 15 October 1857. Here, Baudelaire clearly equates "la bouffonnerie" with "la fantaisie"; it is no longer the "fantaisie" of expansive abandonment pure and simple, but rather of hyperbolic gaiety ("la franche ivresse de la gaieté," P., 1021) sprinkled with earthy humour ("La plaisanterie en est basse, mais elle est franche," P., 1020). Echoing his praise of Hoffmann in his pseudo-treatise on laughter, De l'essence du rire (1855), Baudelaire selects the latter, along with Callot as being representative of this carnivalesque spirit. The figure of Callot, we remember, plays an important rôle in Aloysius Bertrand's Gaspard de la nuit, the influence of which Baudelaire confesses in his preface to the Petits Poèmes en prose:

> Une fois par an, le comique italien fait explosion au Corso et il y atteint les limites de la fureur. . . . Il faut voir, dans la Princesse Brambilla, comme Hoffmann a bien compris le caractère italien, et comme les artistes allemands qui boivent au café Greco en parlent délicatement. Les artistes italiens sont plutôt bouffons que comiques. Ils manquent de profondeur, mais subissent tous la franche ivresse de la gaieté nationale. Matérialiste, comme est généralement le Midi, leur plaisanterie sent toujours la cuisine et le mauvais lieu. Au total, c'est un artiste français, c'est Callot, qui, par la concentration d'esprit et la fermeté de la volonté propres à notre pays, a donné à ce genre de comique sa plus belle expression. C'est un Français qui est resté le meilleur bouffon italien.
> (P., 1021)

It is evident that the term "bouffon" here implies a serious compliment. It is important, indeed, to note that Baudelaire is quite specific about asserting the positive, reinforcing qualities of the term. The "bouffon" is the artist who consciously creates the bouffonesque rêverie through "la concentration d'esprit et la fermeté de la volonté," who actively manages to synthesize the disparate elements inherent in artistic creation into the paradoxical "rêve volontaire." What we have here is none other than a variation on the theme of "Le Thyrse." To stress the volontarisme of the artist's imaginative faculties is, however, to accentuate the precariously fragile nature of the dream. Hence the implicit negative connotations of the "bouffon" image.

An ambiguity of a similar vein is to be found in Baudelaire's account of his meeting with Théophile Gautier, which he recounts in the 1859 monograph on the author:

> Je lui parlai vivement de la puissance étonnante qu'il avait montrée dans le bouffon et le grotesque: mais à ce compliment il répliqua avec candeur qu'au fond il avait en horreur l'esprit et le rire, ce rire qui déforme la créature de Dieu! (P., 680)

It is on account of his misunderstanding of the term "bouffon," which he erroneously equates with the comic, that Gautier cannot appreciate Baudelaire's subtle compliment. That the term "bouffon" is coupled with the "grotesque" would reinforce its affinities with "la rêverie." An identical combination is, furthermore, repeated in the same study: elaborating on the nouvelles of Gautier, Baudelaire writes:

> Dans le grotesque et le bouffon, il est très-puissant. C'est bien la gaieté solitaire d'un rêveur qui de temps à autre ouvre l'écluse à une effusion de jovialité comprimée... (P., 691)

Here, the term "bouffon" partakes both of the universe of fictive extravaganza ("rêveur") as well as of the realms of comic explosion ("effusion de la jovialité").

Baudelaire's monograph on Hugo, published in Réflexions sur quelques-uns de mes contemporains of 1861, affords us further specifics on Baudelaire's notion of "bouffonnerie":

> Dans ces derniers temps il nous a prouvé que, pour vraiment limité qu'il soit, le domaine de la poésie n'en est pas moins, par le droit du génie, presque illimité. Dans quel ordre des choses, par quels nouveaux moyens renouvellera-t-il sa preuve? Est-ce à la bouffonnerie, par exemple (je tire au hasard), à la gaieté immortelle, à la joie, au surnaturel, au féerique et au merveilleux, doués par lui de ce caractère immense, superlatif, dont il sait douer toutes choses, qu'il voudra désormais emprunter des enchantements inconnus? (P., 713)

If the term "bouffonnerie" is interpreted as standing in apposition to the following substantives ("la gaieté immortelle"; "la joie"; "le surnaturel"; "le féerique"; "le merveilleux"), its salient characteristics are clearly those of the expansive and magic world of illusion. That the term has positive connotations would be evident from its ironic context. The fact that Hugo does not yet possess the quality of "bouffonnerie" indicates an implicit condemnation of Hugo, which would be confirmed by the ironic tone of the whole supposedly eulogistic, although over-emphatic article.[64] It is certainly not "au hasard" that Baudelaire has come up with the term "bouffonnerie."

Although Baudelaire criticizes Hugo's lacunae relating to the field of imaginative perception as thus defined, he does, however, acknowledge Hugo's imaginative capacities on a different score, that is to say on the epic and legendary scale. It is not without significance that Baudelaire characterizes this propensity towards myth in the metaphor of the magician:

> Avec quelle majesté il a fait défiler les siècles devant nous, comme des fantômes qui sortiraient d'un mur; avec quelle autorité il les a fait se mouvoir, chacun doué de son parfait costume, de son vrai visage, de sa sincère allure, nous l'avons vu. Avec quel art sublime et subtil, avec quelle familiarité terrible ce prestidigitateur a fait parler et gesticuler les Siècles, il ne me serait pas impossible de l'expliquer; mais ce que je tiens surtout à faire observer, c'est que cet art ne pouvait se mouvoir à l'aise que dans le milieu légendaire, et que c'est (abstraction faite du talent du magicien) le choix du terrain qui facilitait les évolutions du spectacle.
> (P., 712-713)

This passage occurs just before the previously quoted one: the juxtaposition of these two passages clearly indicates that whilst the prestidigitation of the "magicien" may, indeed, be considered as a type of "bouffonnerie," "bouffonnerie" proper is of a somewhat different nature; its hyperbolic gaiety cannot admit of the pedantic and grandiose spectacle conjured up by the magicien-mage.

Baudelaire detects a more delicate type of effervescent "bouffonnerie" in the works of Trimolet; in his study entitled Quelques Caricaturistes français, published in Le Présent of 1 October 1857, Baudelaire writes:

> Trimolet fut une destinée mélancolique; on ne se douterait guère à voir la bouffonnerie gracieuse et enfantine qui souffle à travers ses compositions, que tant de douleurs graves et de chagrins cuisants aient assailli sa pauvre vie. Il a gravé lui-même à l'eau-forte, pour la collection des Chansons populaires de la France et pour les almanachs comiques d'Aubret, de fort beaux dessins, ou plutôt des croquis où règne la plus folle et la plus innocente gaieté. (P., 1011)

"Mélancolie," "bouffonnerie gracieuse et enfantine," "la plus folle et la plus innocente gaieté"--is one not reminded of the dulcet melancholia of the Watteauesque universe?

"Bouffonnerie," whilst primarily evocative of the ethereal realms of fantasy, does not, of necessity, appear in this évasionniste form. Rather, we must look beyond the actual evocation to the underlying principle, which is the imaginative faculty of the artist. "Bouffonnerie" is thus suggestive of the magic patina with which the artist transforms reality, be it ever so gross. In his study on Banville of 1861, Baudelaire alludes to this alternate type of "bouffonnerie," whereby the artist infuses sordid reality with his hyperbolic vision: it is an enchantment of a different sort, but, nevertheless, an "invitation au voyage":

> Mais enfin . . . si lyrique que soit le poëte, peut-il donc ne jamais descendre des régions éthéréennes, voir le spectacle de la vie, la grotesquerie perpétuelle de la bête, la nauséabonde niaiserie de la femme, etc.? . . . Mais si vraiment! le poëte sait descendre dans la vie; mais croyez que s'il y consent, ce n'est pas sans but, et qu'il saura tirer profit de son voyage. De la laideur et de la sottise il fera naître un nouveau genre d'enchantements. Mais ici encore sa bouffonnerie conservera quelque chose d'hyperbolique; l'excès en détruira l'amertume, et la satire, par un miracle résultant de la nature même du poëte, se déchargera de toute sa haine dans une explosion de gaieté, innocente à force d'être carnavalesque. (P., 738)

"La bouffonnerie" may indeed be considered as the dynamic etherealization of reality ("hyperbolique"; "explosion"; "enchantements"; "carnavalesque"). It is interesting to note the following variant in the Boulevard of 24 August 1862: "Mais ici encore sa bouffonnerie conservera encore quelque chose d'hyperbolique." It is almost as if, falling into the trap of hyperbole himself, Baudelaire feels the need to stress the excessive quality of this new type of "bouffonnerie." The "encore" naturally implies that this quality is now being transposed from a different realm of "bouffonnerie," which is, indeed, the case, for "bouffonnerie," whether in its ethereal or more terrestrial form, is essentially emphatic in nature. But, as is to be expected in the ironic Baudelairian universe, paroxysm ends in paradox: implicit in the hyperbolic etherealization is its volatilization.

A somewhat different modulation on the equation "bouffonnerie"-imagination may be observed in the prose poem "Mademoiselle Bistouri," which, for obvious reasons was unpublishable at the time of composition, appearing for the first time in the posthumous 1869 edition. It is a curious anecdote concerning the bizarre fantasies of a somewhat deranged neurotic. Like Poe before him, and Zola after, Baudelaire was, in his own way, intrigued by the psychologically aberrant. It is precisely the propensity towards fantasy, even though it be of a morbid nature, which leads Baudelaire to characterize Mlle Bistouri as "la bouffonne créature" (P., 301):

> "Je voudrais qu'il vînt me voir avec sa trousse et son tablier, même avec un peu de sang dessus!"
> Elle dit cela d'un air fort candide, comme un homme sensible dirait à une comédienne qu'il aimerait: "Je veux vous voir vêtue du costume que vous portiez dans ce fameux rôle que vous avez créé." (P., 302)

An obvious parallel with Samuel's caprice as regards La Fanfarlo ("une bouffonnerie italienne," P., 506) suggests itself at this point:

> Je veux Colombine, rends-moi Colombine: rends-la-moi telle qu'elle m'est apparue le soir qu'elle m'a rendu fou avec son accoutrement fantasque et son corsage de saltimbanque! (P., 509)

The imaginative faculty of the artist is clearly of a histrionic nature--a point which shall be taken up in the following chapter. We note, in parenthesis, that "Mademoiselle Bistouri" is a rare exception to Baudelaire's own dictum which we find in Fusées: "L'Esprit de bouffonnerie peut ne pas exclure la charité, mais c'est rare" (P., 1251).

Whether in the guise of "la rêverie pure" or "la réalité rêvée," "la bouffonnerie" symbolizes the imaginative function of the artistic psyche: it is what Valéry so aptly terms "le lieu privilégié de la danse spirituelle."[65]

* * *

The spiritual dance of poetry finds its complement in the literary gymnastics of the artist, that is to say, the technical mastery over matter required of the artist-*jongleur*; the latter may be compared with the stern *volontarisme* advocated by Baudelaire in "Le Thyrse," and the former with the spiritual arabesques of the poetic imagination.

Art consists in the subtle union of both male and female elements. Hesse, in Narcissus and Goldmund, offers the following depiction of this dialectical synthesis:

> . . . art was a union of the father and mother worlds, of mind and blood. It might start in utter sensuality and lead to total abstraction; then again it might originate in pure concept and end in bleeding flesh. Any work of art that was truly sublime, not just a good juggler's trick; that was filled with the eternal secret, like the master's madonna; every obviously genuine work of art had this dangerous, smiling double face, was male-female, a merging of instinct and pure spirituality.[66]

It is important to note, here, the pejorative nature of the jongleur image, one which was equally current in Baudelaire's day, witness Eugène Minot's disparaging comments concerning Baudelaire's neurotic quest for originality:

> . . . pour être un grand poëte, il faut faire plus que d'imiter les clowns habiles qui font mille contorsions impossibles au commun des martyrs.[67]

The implications here are both linguistic and existential; on the latter plane, Baudelaire's cabotinage, and indeed that of the artists of the fin de siècle, may be considered as a vitiated form of jonglerie.

Baudelaire himself is at pains to dispel these derogatory insinuations; just as he refutes the negative connotations of the word jongleur in his 1857 monograph on Poe, so Baudelaire comes to the defence of the artist-acrobat Gustave Le Vavasseur, in his portrait of the latter in Sur quelques-uns de mes contemporains (1861):

> Je me souviens que, plus d'une fois, en pénétrant chez lui, le matin, je le surpris presque nu, se tenant dangereusement en équilibre sur un échafaudage de chaises. Il essayait de répéter les tours que nous avions vu accomplir la veille par des gens dont c'est la profession. Le poëte m'avoua qu'il se sentait jaloux de tous les exploits de force et d'adresse, et qu'il avait quelquefois connu le

> bonheur de se prouver à lui-même qu'il n'était pas incapable d'en faire autant. Mais, après cet aveu, croyez bien que je ne trouvai pas du tout que le poëte en fût ridicule ou diminué; je l'aurais plutôt loué pour sa franchise et pour sa fidélité à sa propre nature; d'ailleurs, je me souviens que beaucoup d'hommes, d'une nature aussi rare et élevée que la sienne avaient éprouvé des jalousies semblables à l'égard du torero, du comédien et de tous ceux qui, faisant de leur personne une glorieuse pâture publique, soulèvent l'enthousiasme du cirque et du théâtre. (P., 751)

If Baudelaire considers Le Vavasseur's proclivity towards acrobatics as being expressive of his essential nature as an artist ("sa fidélité à sa propre nature"), it is because art is, for him, architectural, the poet a literary architect, an "architecte du style" (Choix de maximes consolantes sur l'amour, P., 470). Pure aesthetics, as he explains in the bombastic work of his youth, Conseils aux jeunes littérateurs, is an impossibility, for aesthetics is solidly grounded upon geometrics:

> Quelque belle que soit une maison, elle est avant tout, --avant que sa beauté soit démontrée, --tant de mètres de haut sur tant de large. --De même la littérature, qui est la matière la plus inappréciable, --est avant tout un remplissage de colonnes; et l'architecte littéraire, dont le nom seul n'est pas une chance de bénéfice, doit vendre à tout prix. (P., 478-479)

Although the second part of this quotation develops a somewhat different theme, that is to say the prostitution of the artist as fabricator of literature, it is relevant to our discussion inasmuch as it is precisely on account of the scientific nature of art, that it can be manipulated in this mechanical way.

Not only is the artist, for Baudelaire, an "architecte littéraire" (P., 479), but language also is endowed with its own architecture, as he explains in his letter to Jules Janin. Refuting Janin's critique of Heine's melancholy, Baudelaire writes:

> Vous êtes un homme heureux. Voilà qui suffit pour vous consoler de toutes erreurs. Vous n'entendez rien à l'architecture des mots, à la plastique de la langue, à la peinture, à la musique, ni à la poésie. (P., 807)

Suffering would appear to be a prerequisite of aesthetic exploration. Structuralist *avant la lettre*, Baudelaire was profoundly aware of the scientific nature of art. It is only through the artful and artistic manipulation of form that the absolute can be relativized, that the vision of the artist can be embodied. It is in this light that we must understand the celebrated dictum in the 1859 article on Gautier:

> Il y a dans le mot, dans le *verbe*, quelque chose de *sacré* qui nous défend d'en faire un jeu de hasard. Manier savamment une langue, c'est pratiquer une espèce de sorcellerie évocatoire. . . . Il y a dans le style de Théophile Gautier une justesse qui ravit, qui étonne, et qui fait songer à ces miracles produits dans le jeu par une profonde science mathématique. (P., 690)

The miracle of art is the paradoxical outcome of calculated inspiration.

Art, however, is more than the facile application of scientific form which presupposes a one-to-one equivalence between the form and the idea. In his *Salon de 1846*, Baudelaire comments on a painting by Ary Scheffer, his *bête noire*, that purported to express a meditation on the eternal life "*que l'oeil n'a pas vue, que l'oreille n'a pas entendue, et où n'atteint pas le coeur de l'homme!*" (P., 931-932). Labelling as absurd this unimaginative attempt to mechanically translate with brush and paint the infinite, Baudelaire characterizes as follows Scheffer's bastardized rendering:

> Il me semble voir un danseur exécutant un pas de mathématiques! (P., 932)

The dancer's "pas de mathématiques" only takes on true significance when the scientific form is aesthetically transcended. Scheffer's inept aping of aesthetic form does not go beyond the purely scientific level.

Baudelaire's critique of Scheffer's misapplication of artistic form may be compared with the spurious type of linguistic _jonglerie_ operated by Hugo, which Baudelaire severly condemns on account of its semantic vacuity:

> Ses vers sur le papier tombent de tout leurs poids.
> Son cerveau sonne creux, mais à défaut d'idées,
> Sa verve dans les mots prend de larges coudées:
> Il altère leur titre en d'étranges abus:
> Chaque vers qu'il enfante est un sombre rebus,
> Chaque phrase un énigme, un jeu de patience
> A damner Despréaux et sa haute science.
> (_Poésies diverses_, P., 220)

Art, according to Baudelaire, is more than verbal gymnastics. Devoid of ideational content, it is no more than "les grands vers menteurs" (P., 220).

The mathematical dance of the _jongleur_ is again conjured up in _La Morale du joujou_, published in _Le Monde Littéraire_ of 17 April 1853, where Baudelaire discusses the effect of various toys on the disposition of the child, the toy being "la première initiation de l'enfant à l'art" (P., 526), and the child being the embryonic form of the artist. It is of no little significance that Baudelaire chooses to illustrate the nature of the "joujou scientifique" (P., 528), such as the "stéréoscope" or the "phénakisticope," through the example of the "jongleur" or "danseur":

> Supposez un mouvement quelconque, par exemple un exercice de danseur ou de jongleur, divisé et décomposé en un certain nombre de mouvements; supposez que chacun de ces mouvements . . . soit représenté par une figure entière du jongleur ou du danseur, et qu'ils soient tous dessinés autour d'un cercle de carton. (P., 528)

What we witness here is the decomposition of the magic spectacle into its mathematical components. Art, too, is a mathematical construct, a type of geometric jonglerie.[68]

It is not surprising, therefore, that Baudelaire should compare artistic creation with the gymnastics of the saltimbanque. In his article on Léon Cladel's Les Martyrs ridicules, published in La Revue Fantaisiste of 15 October 1861, Baudelaire derides the fatuous "fanfaronnades" (P., 754) of the Bohème littéraire, with its stubborn refusal to submit to anything but euphoric inspiration, and emphasizes the necessity for artistic inspiration to be governed by technical expertise, which is only the fruit of rigorous training:

> De son absolue confiance dans le génie et l'inspiration, elle [la jeunesse littéraire] tire le droit de ne se soumettre à aucune gymnastique. Elle ignore que le génie (si toutefois on peut appeler ainsi le germe indéfinissable du grand homme) doit, comme le saltimbanque apprenti risquer de se rompre mille fois les os en secret avant de danser devant le public; que l'inspiration, en un mot, n'est que la récompense de l'exercice quotidien. (P., 754)

Genius, says Baudelaire, is not involuntary in nature, but solidly grounded in scientific calculation.

Sublime poetry, as Baudelaire explains in his monograph on Banville, is born of the confluence of exuberance ("sa primitive faculté d'expansion," P., 734) and discipline ("une habileté consommée," P., 735). It is these qualities which Baudelaire discerns in Les Stalactites, which represent, for him, a definite progression over the lyrical effusion of Les Cariatides, which he also criticizes on account of the numerous imitative pieces. The technical mastery required of the consummate artist, which is achieved only by the mature poet, is once again expressed in the metaphor of the acrobat:

> Toutefois ce n'est que plus tard, après s'être joué dans mille difficultés, dans mille gymnastiques que les vrais amoureux de la Muse peuvent seuls apprécier à leur juste valeur, que le poëte, réunissant dans un accord parfait l'exubérance de sa nature primitive et l'expérience de sa maturité, produira, l'une servant l'autre, des poëmes d'une habileté consommée et d'un charme sui generis. (P., 734-735)[69]

The metaphor of the acrobat is positively allied with the notion of control: in this context, one might consider its application to that hyper-disciplined being, the dandy, whose life is, indeed, dehumanized into an aesthetic structure, and whose being-as-restrained-passion is the perfect symbol of poetry:

> Etrange spiritualisme! Pour ceux qui en sont à la fois les prêtres et les victimes, toutes les conditions matérielles compliquées auxquelles ils se soumettent, depuis la toilette irréprochable à toute heure de la journée et de la nuit jusqu'aux tours les plus périlleux du sport, ne sont qu'une gymnastique propre à fortifier la volonté et à discipliner l'âme. (P., 1179)

The artist is essentially an intellectual gymnast ("L'homme de lettres remue des capitaux et donne le goût de la gymnastique intellectuelle," Fusées, P., 1250). Indeed, it is precisely in these terms that Gautier chooses to characterize Baudelaire in his study of the poet for Eugène Crépet's Poètes français, published in 1862:

> De tous les poëtes éclos après la splendide irradiation de l'école romantique, M. Charles Baudelaire est assurément le plus originel, et par nature, et par volonté: car ce n'est pas une de ces organisations qui produisent des vers comme les orangers des oranges. . . . Il a le don, mais il a aussi le travail. . . . Habile entre les habiles, il s'est rompu dans ce gymnase intérieur où s'exercent les forts.[70]

Implied in the intellectual gymnastics of the artist is the voluntary alteration of a given state of consciousness. Whilst the *volontarisme* is a constituent element of this intellectual gymnastics, Baudelaire does, on occasion, employ the metaphor of intellectual gymnastics to suggest simply a different level of awareness, whether this be volunatary or no. In fact, in *Le Poëme du haschisch*, where Baudelaire describes the fanciful flights of the drug-induced state, the metaphor is decidedly involuntary in nature:

> Je veux définir . . . et analyser le ravage moral causé par cette dangereuse et délicieuse gymnastique.
> (P., 374)

This pernicious form of gymnastics is to be contrasted with what Baudelaire terms "la saine gymnastique" (P., 348), that is to say, gymnastics in its voluntary form.

The intellectual gymnastics of the poet finds its complement in the physical gymnastics of the poet-acrobat, whose duty it is also, if he is to be able to soar to the elevated heights of poetry, to respect his physical being by leading a life of sobriety. One would hardly recognize the dandy *débraillé* of the *Ecole Normande* period in the following extract taken from his 1859 monograph on Gautier:

> Nous causâmes ensuite de l'hygiène, des ménagements que l'homme de lettres doit à son corps et de sa sobriété obligée. Bien que pour illustrer la matière il ait tiré, je crois, quelques comparaisons de la vie des danseuses et des chevaux de courses, la méthode dont il traita son thème (de la sobriété, comme preuve du respect dû à l'art et aux facultés poétiques) me fit penser à ce que disent les livres de piété sur la nécessité de respecter notre corps comme temple de Dieu. (P., 680)

Physical containment must go hand in hand with intellectual containment: both these aspects are epitomized in the metaphor of the dancer.

Although the gymnastics metaphor is primarily a positive one, indicating the solid application of the artist to his métier, his volontarisme, it does, on occasion, appear with an apparently negative connotation. Lamenting the deplorable lack of imagination of contemporary painters, Baudelaire writes, in his Exposition universelle de 1855:

> L'imagination qui soutenait ces grands maîtres, dévoyés dans leur gymnastique académique, l'imagination, cette reine des facultés, a disparu. (P., 963)

Unlike the classical master, such as David, whose imagination was unencumbered by the academic constraints which he could manipulate and transcend with acrobatic dexterity, the modern artist, of which Ingres is the exemplar, appears somewhat of an unimaginative pedant. Baudelaire thus criticizes the rigidity and misapplication of the Moderns concerning the once noble art of academic gymnastics. The intrinsic value of the classical norms cannot be ignored by the accomplished artist: the imaginative gymnastics of the artist-magician is, however, the necessary complement of his academic "gymnastique" ("Car il est évident que les rhétoriques et les prosodies ne sont pas des tyrannies inventées arbitrairement, mais une collection de règles réclamées par l'organisation même de l'être spirituel. Et jamais les prosodies et les rhétoriques n'ont empêché l'originalité de se produire distinctement," Salon de 1859, P., 1043).

A variation on the theme of academic gymnastics appears in Baudelaire's diatribe against the puerile utopia of the Art for Art's sakers in L'Ecole païenne, published in La Semaine Théâtrale of 22 January 1852, where he fustigates their inordinate love of form to the exclusion of all else:

> Puissent la religion et la philosophie venir un jour, comme forcées par le cri d'un désespéré. Telle sera toujours la destinée des insensés qui ne voient dans la nature que des rythmes et des formes. Encore la philosophie ne leur apparaîtra-t-elle d'abord que comme un jeu intéressant, une gymnastique agréable, une escrime dans le vide. (P., 627)

Here the gymnastics metaphor is decidedly pejorative: the philosophical import of the work of art can have no meaning for a "formophile"; philosophy thus appears to the Art for Art's sakers as no more than an agreeable, though ultimately worthless, form of intellectual gymnastics.

The gymnastics of the poet-acrobat has, ultimately, an allegorical significance: gymnastics is the very symbol of transcendence. The acrobat, as Genet explains so eloquently, stands for metamorphosis, for the death of the empirical self in the service of the aesthetic self: "Que sa personne se réduise de plus en plus pour laisser scintiller, toujours plus éclatante, cette image dont je parle qu'un mort habite."[71] The leap of the acrobat symbolizes the hyperbolic dépassement required of poetic language in its perpetual transcendence of the literal. The literal must become liminal. Implied in the metaphor of the acrobat is also the notion of oscillation in the artiste's fluctuation between reality and hyper-reality. This may be interpreted in terms of the symbol itself, inasmuch as the latter is a hieroglyph, the meaning of which is contained in the flux between the sign as form and the sign as evocation. One might recall, at this point, the dual filiation of the clown symbol, in which are synthesized the Calibanesque clod attached to the earth, who may be seen to symbolize matter, and his aerial counterpart, who represents the spiritual part of matter. Gymnastics is, in the final analysis, the perfect symbol of the symbol. Indeed, the protean nature of the gymnastics metaphor, itself oscillating between the syntactic and the semantic, would confirm this point. The protean nature of the gymnastics metaphor is, in fact, a type of gymnastics in itself: it is the gymnastics of gymnastics, much as poetry, for the Romantic artist or the Romantic ironist, has become the poetry of poetry.

The art of the acrobat, whilst evoking the skill and grace required in aesthetic creation, also stands for the aesthetic conquest itself, that is to say the transmutation of sentiment into fiction. As with the terror-inducing spectacle of the acrobat, the emotion is conquered aesthetically by the artist, thereby offering pleasure in reassurance against the terror. "Poètes," writes Delétang-Tardiff, "nous avons tout à apprendre des acrobates, jusqu'à ce sourire final à la vie, qui indique, une fois de plus, que la mort cotoyée n'a pas laissé de traces, qu'elle s'est effacée devant un équilibre dont elle n'est que l'ombre démesurée."[72]

The acrobat's dramatic leap into space may also be compared with the artist's existential awareness, the acrobat's tango with death symbolizing the hypersensitivity of the artist in response to his acute awareness of the finitude of life. Baudelaire, lamenting the impoverished critical acumen of his contemporaries, notes the following in his Salon de 1859:

> Je ne suis pas de ceux qui envient à une chanteuse ou à une danseuse, parvenue au sommet de son art, une fortune acquise par un labeur et un danger quotidiens. (P., 1029)

The artist ultimately perceives life sub specie aeternitatis.[73] It is here that the metaphor of the acrobat fuses with that of the buffoon, for the latter, in his capacity as the witty exponent of the essence of man's being, is often associated, in what may be considered an archetypal situation, with death, witness, for example the grave-digging scene in Hamlet, or Nietzsche's buffoon in Thus Spoke Zarathustra.[74] If the achievement of the artist is considered in this light--it is then that any illusion of permanence which the artist might have becomes gratuitous: this is conveyed in the fleeting impermanence of the acrobat's performance. The instant recognition of the acrobat, despite the ephemeral nature of his art, offers a further point of comparison with the artist as poet, as a type of wish-fulfilment, for the artist usually receives posthumous recognition. This is especially true in Baudelaire's case.

The scientific rigours of the gymnastics metaphor find expression in what may be considered a type of sub-metaphor which we find in the image of the fencer.[75] The toil and physical effort of the artist-fencer translates the martial elements inherent in artistic creation, the duel in which the artist is engaged and in which he screams in fright before being vanquished ("L'étude du beau est un duel où l'artiste crie de frayeur avant d'être vaincu," "Le Confiteor de l'artiste," P., 232). In Le Peintre de la vie moderne, Baudelaire describes the aesthetic duel of the painter Guys with intractable matter; he describes how the painter stabs away with his pencil, his pen or his brush, actively and intently pursuing his chimaera, as though afraid that his images might escape him, as he pursues his solitary combat, parrying his own blows:

> Maintenant à l'heure où les autres dorment, celui-ci est penché sur sa table, dardant sur une feuille de papier le même regard qu'il attachait sur les choses, s'escrimant avec son crayon, sa plume, son pinceau, faisant jaillir l'eau du verre au plafond, essuyant sa plume sur sa chemise, pressé, violent, actif, comme s'il craignait que les images ne lui échappent, querelleur quoique seul, et se bousculant lui-même. (P., 1162)

The martial aesthetics of Guys may be compared with the "soubresauts de plume" (_Salon de 1846_, P., 924) of the painter Granier de Cassagnac, who, incidentally, is characterized by his "tournure martiale" (ibid.).

The pictorial stabbings of the artist can be transposed onto the linguistic or the psychic plane. The two are obviously interrelated: the linguistic explorations of the poet become the surgical mind-probings of the artist-_héautontimorouménos_. For his probings to be probative, the artist must adopt an anarchical stance towards language. Indeed, for the artist to massacre language is to sacralize his very being.

Baudelaire's martial aesthetics expresses, basically, the rigorous scientific training required of the artist, who must first come to grips with his _métier_ before being able to transcend it. Explicating Flaubert's choice of an impersonal style in his article on _Madame Bovary_, published in _L'Artiste_ of 18 October 1857, Baudelaire contrasts, through the fencing metaphor ("un esprit . . . façonné à une forte escrime," P., 651), the lyrical propulsion towards the Beautiful with the technical expertise required of the artist in order to realize his vision. The incisiveness of the fencer must also be the _sine qua non_ of the artist.

Although the above images of the fencer suggest the heroic efforts of the artist at grips with his recalcitrant material, the fencer metaphor may also appear in a very negative light, whereby the artist-fencer is parodically metamorphosed into a tottering clown. In the opening stanza of his poem "Le Soleil," Baudelaire ironically portrays the inept stumblings of the poet-as-pseudo-Hamlet, in the throes of his poetic labours:

> Le long du vieux faubourg, où pendent aux masures
> Les persiennes, abri de secrètes luxures,
> Quand le soleil cruel frappe à traits redoublés
> Sur la ville et les champs, sur les toits et les blés,
> Je vais m'exercer à ma fantasque escrime,
> Flairant dans tous les coins les hasards de la rime,
> Trébuchant sur les mots comme sur les pavés,
> Heurtant parfois des vers depuis longtemps rêvés.
> (P., 79)

The self-irony is deftly "irrealized" by the quasi-idyllic framework of the poem: it is almost as if there were some type of censorship mechanism in operation to gild the all-too-painful realisation.

The decidedly unheroic fencer shows definite affinities with that other "éclopé de la vie" (P., 245), the "chiffonnier," who is presented in similar fashion:

> On voit un chiffonnier qui vient, hochant la tête,
> Butant et se cognant aux murs comme un poëte.
> (P., 101)

The canine affiliations of the poet-fencer, which bring to mind the prose poem "Les Bons Chiens," again accentuate the self-parody on the part of the artist. The gauche flounderings of the artist as fencer-chiffonnier contrast sharply with the proud volontarisme and masterly control of the artist-acrobat.

A linguistic "escrime" of a somewhat different nature is suggested in the poem of Baudelaire's youth "Tous imberbes alors," where the image of the fencer quite clearly fuses with that of the _bouffon_:

> C'était dans ce vieux temps mémorable et marquant,
> Où forcés d'élargir le classique carcan,
> Les professeurs encor rebelles à vos rimes,
> Succombaient sous l'effort de nos folles escrimes
> Et laissaient l'écolier, triomphant et mutin,
> Faire à l'aise hurler Triboulet en latin.
> (P., 198)

Expressed in these lines is the theme of Romantic rebellion. The type of "escrime" portrayed here differs considerably from the previous image of the fencer: the curious exercise ("fantasque excrime," P., 79) of the fencer-"chiffonnier" becomes the mischievous horseplay of the impish schoolboy. Aesthetic creation is indeed a _mélange_ of bemused inquisitiveness and playful buffoonery. In his duel with language, the artist is, at one and the same time, the disgraced clown, the graceless fencer-"chiffonnier," involuntarily tripping across his poetic finds, and the outrageous buffoon, boldly experimenting with new forms.

The "escrime" metaphor appears, on occasion, with a double edge. In his _Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe_ of 1857, Baudelaire laments the incomprehension of the poet by his contemporaries, the incessant struggles of the "pure" poet against the positivist society in which he must live and function:

> Nous connaissons tous cette loyale escrime. Les reproches que les mauvais critiques font aux bons poètes sont les mêmes dans tous les pays. En lisant cet article, il me semblait lire la traduction d'un de ces nombreux réquisitoires dressés par les critiques parisiens contre ceux de nos poètes qui sont les plus amoureux de la perfection.[76]

The social "escrime" of the poet with his hostile public parallels the aesthetic duel of the poet with Beauty ("nos poètes . . . amoureux de la perfection"). The conclusion is the same in both instances: the poet-pariah is the buffoon, eternally at the mercy of both his social milieu and his aesthetic pretensions.

NOTES

[1] H. James, quoted by W. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 104.

[2] L.N. Bescherelle, Dictionnaire national ou dictionnaire universel de la langue française (Paris: Simon, 1845-1847).

[3] Alpha Encyclopédie (Paris: Grange Batelière, 1970).

[4] P. Larousse, Grand Dictionnaire universel du dix-neuvième siècle (Paris: Larousse, 1873).

[5] Curiosités esthétiques, l'art romantique et autres oeuvres critiques (Paris: Garnier, 1962), pp. 621-622.

[6] M. Butor, Histoire extraordinaire: Essai sur un rêve de Baudelaire (Paris; Gallimard, 1961), pp. 189-190.

[7] J. Starobinski, "Sur quelques répondants allégoriques du poète," Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, 67 (1967), 406: "Sans doute l'image du clown tragique ne fait-elle que relayer une tradition mythique dont les cirques du dix-neuvième siècle n'aient pas perdu complètement le souvenir. Les études des anglicistes l'ont montré avec assez d'évidence: l'un tout au moins des types clownesques de l'époque elisabéthaine--le balourd qui reçoit les gifles--se laisse identifier comme l'héritier lointain d'un roi de dérision destiné, lors des rites agraires, au simulacre d'un sacrifice propitiatoire. Quant à l'autre type clownesque, celui qui s'ébroue avec agilité, il procède en revanche d'un prototype diabolique, Vice, auquel les mystères médiévaux faisaient une large place en lui réservant un rôle indirect dans l'économie du salut de l'homme."

[8] G. Raynaud, "La Mesnie Hellequin," in Etudes Romanes dédiées à Gaston Paris (Paris: Bouillon, 1891), pp. 51-68.

[9] W. Willeford, The Fool and his Sceptre: A Study in Clowns and Jesters and their Audience (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 33.

[10] A. Tabarant, La Vie artistique au temps de Baudelaire (Paris: Mercure de France, 1963), p. 221.

[11] For a study of Baudelaire's cabotin legend, see (i) W.T. Bandy and C. Pichois, Baudelaire devant ses contemporains (Paris: Rocher, 1957); (ii) A.E. Carter, Baudelaire et la critique française: 1868-1917 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1963).

[12] J.-P. Sartre, Baudelaire (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), pp. 114-115.

[13] J. Levallois, "Au pays de Bohême," La Revue Bleue, 5 January 1895, quoted by A.E. Carter, op. cit., p. 75: "Tout en lui était factice et prémédité, tout en vue de la galerie se composât-elle d'une seule personne. . . . La griserie chez lui était purement cérébrale; elle suffisait à en faire un parfait cabotin, car c'est là son vrai nom. Si le cabotinage n'était de toutes les époques, je dirais volontiers que Baudelaire est le père et le grand-père du cabotinage contemporain. . . . C'est par cette attitude de comédien . . . qu'il tranchait sur sa génération et sur la nôtre."

[14] See J. Vallès' description of Baudelaire as a "fanfaron d'immoralité qui se veut original à tout prix" ("Charles Baudelaire," Europe, 456-457 [1967], p. 224).

[15] See J. Tellier, Nos Poètes (Paris: Lecène et Oudin, 1889), quoted by A.E. Carter, op. cit., p. 110: "Il y avait enfin une manière de charlatan, soucieux d'étonner par des moyens faciles, coutumier d'effets de brutalité, amoureux de scandale."

[16] T. de Banville, quoted by A. Tabarant, op. cit., p. 294.

[17] Curiosités esthétiques, op. cit., p. 615.

[18] Ibid., p. 600.

[19] Ibid., p. 637.

[20] W. Deonna, Le Symbolisme de l'acrobatie antique (Wetteren, Belgium: De Meester, 1953), pp. 125-27.

[21] S. Tarachow, "Circuses and Clowns," in Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences, ed. G. Roheim (New York: International Universities Press, 1951), III, 174.

[22] *Théodore de Banville* (P., 736): "Tout d'abord constatons que l'hyperbole et l'apostrophe sont des formes de langage qui lui sont non seulement des plus agréables mais aussi des plus nécessaires, puisque ces formes dérivent naturellement d'un état exagéré de la vitalité."

[23] L.N. Bescherelle, op. cit.

[24] C. Cros, *Le Coffret de santal* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), p. 105.

[25] M. Butor, *Histoire extraordinaire: Essai sur un rêve de Baudelaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961). On this point, see also R. Wilcocks, "Towards a Re-examination of 'L'Héautontimorouménos,'" *French Review*, 48 (1975), 566-579.

[26] M. Turnell, *Baudelaire: A Study of his Poetry* (New York: New Directions, 1972), pp. 122-123.

[27] Cf. *Fusées* XV: "Je crois que le charme infini et mystérieux qui gît dans la contemplation d'un navire, et surtout d'un navire en mouvement, tient, dans le premier cas, à la régularité et à la symétrie qui sont un des besoins primordiaux de l'esprit humain, au même degré que la complication et l'harmonie, et, dans le second cas, à la multiplication successive et à la génération de toutes les courbes et figures imaginaires opérées dans l'espace par les éléments réels de l'objet.

L'idée poétique qui se dégage de cette opération du mouvement dans les lignes est l'hypothèse d'un être vaste, immense, compliqué, mais eurythmique, d'un animal plein de génie, souffrant et soupirant tous les soupirs et toutes les ambitions humaines" (P., 1261). This text should be read in conjunction with Baudelaire's geometrical description of the gymnastics of poetry in his preface to *Les Fleurs du mal* (the passage beginning "Que la phrase poëtique peut imiter. . . ," P., 186).

[28] Gonzague de Reynold, quoted by R.-B. Chérix, *Essai d'une critique intégrale: Commentaire des* Fleurs du mal (Geneva: Droz, 1962), p. 214.

[29] J. Chevalier and A. Gheerbrant, *Dictionnaire des symboles* (Paris: Laffont, 1969), p. 697.

[30] For a detailed discussion of the genesis of the thyrsus symbol, see M. Zimmerman, "La Genèse du symbole du thyrse chez Baudelaire," *Bulletin Baudelairien*, 2 (1966), 8-11.

[31] *Un Mangeur d'opium*: (i) "De Quincey est essentiellement digressif. . . . Il compare, en un endroit, sa pensée à un thyrse, simple bâton qui tire toute sa physionomie et tout son charme du feuillage compliqué qui l'enveloppe" (P., 390); (ii) ". . . cette pensée est le *thyrse* dont il a si plaisamment parlé. . . . Le sujet n'a pas d'autre valeur que celle d'un bâton sec et nu; mais les rubans, les pampres et les fleurs peuvent être, par leurs entrelacements folâtres, une richesse précieuse pour les yeux. La pensée de de Quincey n'est pas seulement sinueuse; le mot n'est pas assez fort: elle est naturellement spirale" (P., 461).

[32] In *Le Neveu de Rameau* (Paris: Garnier, 1967, p. 141) there is a discussion of vocal music in terms reminiscent of the thyrsus symbol: "Il faut considérer la déclamation comme une ligne; et le chant comme une autre ligne qui serpenterait sur la première. Plus cette déclamation, type du chant, sera forte et vraie; plus le chant qui s'y conforme la coupera en un plus grand nombre de points; plus le chant sera vrai, et plus il sera beau."

[33] J. Starobinski, *La Relation critique* (Paris: Garnier, 1960), p. 16.

[34] A. Rimbaud, *Illuminations*, *Oeuvres* (Paris: Garnier, 1960), p. 271.

[35] C. Collins, *The Vision of the Fool* (London: Grey Walls Press, 1947), p. 17.

[36] G. Poulet, "Baudelaire et la circonférence changeante," *Courrier du Centre International d'Etudes Poétiques* (Brussels), 21-22 (1958), 3.

[37] Cf. (i) "Une Hémisphère dans une chevelure": "Dans l'océan de ta chevelure, j'entrevois un port fourmillant de chants mélancoliques . . . de navires de toutes formes découpant leur architectures fines et compliquées sur un ciel immense" (P., 252); (ii) *Fusées*: "Ces beaux et grands navires, imperceptiblement balancés (dandinés) sur les eaux tranquilles, ces robustes navires, à l'air désoeuvrés et nostalgique, ne nous disent-ils pas dans une langue muette: Quand partons-nous pour le bonheur?" (P., 1253); (iii) *Mon Coeur mis à nu*: "Pourquoi le spectacle de la mer est-il si infiniment et si éternellement agréable? Parce que la mer offre à la fois l'idée de l'immensité et du mouvement. Six ou sept lieus représentent pour l'homme le rayon de l'infini. Voilà un infini diminutif. Qu'importe s'il suffit à suggérer l'idée de l'infini total? Douze ou quatorze lieus (sur le diamètre), douze ou quatorze de liquide en mouvement suffisent pour donner la plus haute idée de beauté qui soit offerte à l'homme sur son habitacle transitoire" (P., 1290).

[38] A. Artaud, *Le Théâtre et son double* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), pp. 195-207.

[39] J.-P. Richard, "Profondeur de Baudelaire," in *Poésie et profondeur* (Paris: Seuil, 1955), pp. 91-162.

[40] Ibid., p. 108.

[41] Cf. *Fusées* IV: "Le dessin arabesque est le plus spiritualiste de tous les dessins" (P., 1250).

[42] V. Jankélévitch, *L'Ironie* (Paris: Flammarion, 1964), pp. 49-50.

[43] P. Valéry, "Poésie et pensée abstraite," *Oeuvres*, ed. J. Hytier (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), I, 1314-1340.

[44] Ibid., p. 165.

[45] J. Chevalier and A. Gheerbrant, op. cit., p. 276: "Les gestes étaient un langage, partant du plus profond de l'inconscient et s'abandonnant aux pulsions divines: l'enthousiasme était la présence intérieure du dieu. La danse symbolisait et appelait l'action du dieu. La danse religieuse et cosmique est un rite d'identification au créateur et à la création." Cf. also G. Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925).

[46] M. Butor, "*Les Paradis artificiels*," *Répertoire I* (Paris: Minuit, 1960), pp. 115-119.

[47] R. Barthes, "Le Théâtre de Baudelaire," in *Essais critiques* (Paris: Seuil, 1964), p. 43.

[48] "L'acteur a trois heures pour être Iago ou Alceste, Phèdre ou Gloucester. Dans ce court passage, il les fait naître et mourir sur cinquante mètres carrés de planches. Jamais l'absurde n'a été si bien ni si longtemps illustré." "La Comédie," *Le Mythe de Sisyphe: Essai sur l'absurde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1942), p. 104.

[49] Cf. letter to Arondel, 1854 (*Corr.*, I, 277): "Je vous engage, si vous voulez voir mes merveilleux chinois, --à aller là-bas de *bonne heure*."

[50] E. Quinet, *Ahasvérus*, quoted by R. Bourgeois, *L'Ironie romantique: Spectacle et jeu de Mme de Staël à G. de Nerval* (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1974), p. 231.

[51] A.-M. Lugné-Poe, "Le Tremplin," in *Le Sot du tremplin: Souvenirs et impressions de théâtre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1930), p. 53.

[52] Cf. H. Hesse's linguistic dance on the orthographic level in *Narcissus and Goldmund* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969), pp. 61-62: ". . . these small stimulants were enough to puncture the skin of reality, to unleash the raging abysses, streams, and milky ways of an image world of the soul that lay beneath peacefully barren reality. A Latin initial changed to his mother's perfumed face, a long note in the *Ave* became the gate to Paradise, a Greek letter a galloping horse, a rearing serpent that quickly slithered off through the flowers, leaving the rigid page of grammar in its place. . . . Sometimes I'll be writing a Greek letter, a theta or an omega, and tilt my pen just the slightest bit; suddenly the letter has a tail and becomes a fish; in a second it evokes all the streams and rivers of the world, all that is cool and humid, Homer's sea and the waters on which Saint Peter wandered; or it becomes a bird, flaps its tail, shakes out its feathers, puffs itself up, laughs, flies away."

[53] J. Chevalier and A. Gheerbrant, op. cit., p. 276: "Danse: symbole de la libération des limites matérielles, la danse peut devenir la manifestation de la vie spirituelle."

[54] *Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe*, op. cit., p. 636.

[55] J. Huizinga, *Homo ludens: Essai sur la fonction sociale du jeu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), p. 197.

[56] S. Freud, "The Relation of the Poet to Daydreaming," in *On Creativity and the Unconscious: Papers on the Psychology of Art, Literature, Love, and Religion*, ed. B. Nelson (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), pp. 44-54.

[57] F. Nietzsche, *The Philosophy of the Tragic Era of the Greeks*, quoted by E. Fink, "The Oasis of Happiness: Toward an Ontology of Play," *Yale French Studies* (Game, Play, Literature), 41 (1968), 29.

[58] R. Misrahi, "L'Art et son sérieux," *Deucalion* (L'Art et le jeu), 6 (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière, 1957), pp. 150-151.

[59] R. Caillois, *L'Homme et le sacré* (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), p. 208.

[60] S. Freud, op. cit.

[61] Cf. (i) Letter to Charles Asselineau, 13 March 1856: ". . . ils [les rêves] sont un langage hiéroglyphe dont je n'ai pas la clef" (Corr., I, 338); (ii) "Les Tentations ou Eros, Plutus et la gloire": "Deux superbes Satans et une Diablesse, non moins extraordinaire, ont la nuit dernière monté l'escalier mystérieux par où l'Enfer donne assaut à la faiblesse de l'homme qui dort, et communique en secret avec lui" (P., 259). To place Baudelaire's interest in intrapsychic phenomena in its proper perspective, see Trilling's excellent study of "Freud and Literature," where the connection between Freud and the Romantic tradition is discussed (in Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, ed. D. Lodge [London: Longman, 1972], pp. 276-290).

[62] A. Rimbaud, op. cit., p. 120.

[63] C. Cros, op. cit., p. 165.

[64] Victor Hugo: "Dans les temps, déjà si lointains, dont je parlais, temps heureux où les littérateurs étaient, les uns pour les autres, une société que les survivants regrettent et dont ils ne trouveront plus l'analogue, Victor Hugo représentait celui vers qui chacun se tourne pour demander le mot d'ordre. Jamais royauté ne fut plus légitime, plus naturelle, plus acclamée par la reconnaissance, plus confirmée par l'impuissance de la rébellion. Quand on se figure ce qu'était la poésie française avant qu'il apparût, et quel rajeunissement elle a subi depuis qu'il est venu; quand on imagine ce peu qu'elle eût été s'il n'était pas venu; combien de sentiments mystérieux et profonds, qui ont été exprimés, seraient restés muets; combien d'intelligences il a accouchées, combien d'hommes qui ont rayonné par lui seraient restés obscurs, il est impossible de ne pas le considérer comme un de ces esprits rares et providentiels qui opèrent, dans l'ordre littéraire, le salut de tous, comme d'autres dans l'ordre moral et d'autres dans l'ordre politique" (P., 703).

[65] P. Valéry, "Philosophie de la danse," op. cit., p. 1403.

[66] H. Hesse, op. cit., p. 171.

[67] E. Minot, "Nos Poètes," La Parisienne, October 1865, pp. 250-251, quoted by W.T. Bandy and C. Pichois, op. cit., p. 238.

Cf. P. Larousse, Grand Dictionnaire universel (Paris, 1870), where the positive disdain felt towards the lowly fairground artist is expressed in no uncertain terms: "Danseurs de corde: le danseur de corde est un artiste qui exécute sur une corde tendue, des tours de force, de grâce et d'agilité. Nous disons artiste à dessein, et non baladin comme nos devanciers, car danser sur la corde nous semble un art au moins égal, sinon supérieur, à celui, moins dangereux qui consiste à danser sur les planches d'un théâtre. Disons mieux, cet art périlleux de la voltige aérienne nous intéresse bien autrement que les jetés-battus et les pointes emphatiques d'un Vestris prétentieux ou d'un Gardel affadi, accomplis méthodiquement sur un parquet solide. A défaut d'intrépidité qu'il impose à ses fervents, nous aurions pour le faire aimer, une raison assez bonne: il est méconnu de l'opinion, laquelle se montre à son endroit, comme en beaucoup d'autres choses, aveugle et inconséquente. Ainsi qui nous expliquera valablement pourquoi telle pensionnaire de l'Opéra prend le titre d'artiste, tandis que sa voisine, la superbe cabrioleuse, lancée comme un sylphe dans l'infini, a droit seulement au titre dédaigné de saltimbanque?"

[68] That this is the case, one has but to read Baudelaire's description of the gymnastics of poetry in his projected preface for Les Fleurs du mal, where we witness the decomposition of poetry into linear form, or rather animated linear form. The gymnastics of poetry clearly resembles the art of the acrobat: "Que la phrase poëtique peut imiter (et par là elle touche à l'art musical et à la science mathématique) la ligne horizontale, la ligne droite ascendante, la ligne droite descendante; qu'elle peut monter à pic vers le ciel, sans essoufflement, ou descendre perpendiculairement vers l'enfer avec la vélocité de toute pesanteur; qu'elle peut suivre la spirale, décrire la parabole, ou le zigzag figurant une série d'angles superposés" (P., 186). It is none other than a variation on a theme of "Le Thyrse," the marriage, through art, of imagination and science ("par là elle touche à l'art musical et à la science mathématique").

[69] Cf. Pierre Dupont: "Le volume obtint un prix à l'Académie, et Pierre Dupont eut dès lors une petite place en qualité d'aide aux travaux du Dictionnaire. Je crois volontiers que ces fonctions, quelques minimes qu'ils fussent en apparence, servirent à augmenter et perfectionner en lui le goût de la belle langue. Contraint d'entendre souvent les discussions orageuses de la rhétorique et de la grammaire antique aux prises avec la moderne, les querelles vives et spirituelles de M. Cousin avec M. Victor Hugo, son esprit dut se fortifier à cette gymnastique, et il apprit ainsi à connaître l'immense valeur du mot propre" (P., 609).

[70] T. Gautier, quoted by A. Tabarant, op. cit., p. 297.

[71] J. Genet, "Le Funambule," in Les Bonnes et L'Atelier de Giacometti (Décines, Isère: L'Arbalète, 1958), p. 184.

[72] Y. Delétang-Tardiff, "Fragments sur le mime, le clown et l'acteur," Théâtre (Paris), 4 (1945), 256.

[73] Cf. H. Hesse, op. cit., p. 157: "He thought that fear of death was perhaps the root of all art, perhaps also of all things of the mind. We fear death, we shudder at life's instability, we grieve to see the flowers wilt again and again, and the leaves fall, and in our hearts we know that we, too, are transitory and will soon disappear. When artists create pictures and thinkers search for laws and formulate thoughts, it is in order to salvage something from the great dance of death, to make something that lasts longer than we do."

[74] F. Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), pp. 47-49.

[75] For a detailed discussion of the image of the fencer, see W. Benjamin, Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism (London: N.L.B., 1973), pp. 67-68.

[76] Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe, op. cit., pp. 638-639.

Lift not the painted veil which
    those who live
Call Life.
        P.B. Shelley, "Sonnet"[1]

CHAPTER V

THE ARTIST-HISTRIO, OR THE MAGIC THEATRE OF AESTHETIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Another facet of the bouffon may be discerned in the mask of the histrio, with its aesthetic, social and metaphysical implications. The bouffon implies, we remember, the awareness of "l'autre face de la réalité"[2]: he is the incarnation of "la conscience ironique." The bouffon represents the collision of two worlds--the world of reality, and a world beyond reality, that is to say, the world of unreality or illusion. The distinct opposition between these two elements is, perhaps, a little simplistic, for the reciprocity which governs them can operate in such a way that illusion becomes reality: illusion can, as Baudelaire explains in his Salon de 1859, become, on occasion, a more intense form of reality, a hyper-reality, and reality itself partake of the dream:

> Je désire être ramené vers les dioramas dont la magie brutale et énorme sait m'imposer une utile illusion. Je préfère contempler quelques décors de théâtre, où je trouve artistement exprimés et tragiquement concentrés mes rêves les plus chers. Ces choses, parce qu'elles sont fausses, sont infiniment plus près du vrai; tandis que la plupart de nos paysagistes sont des menteurs, justement parce qu'ils ont négligé de mentir. (P., 1085)

Baudelaire also notes the following in Puisque réalisme il y a, a projected article of his written around 1855 to protest against Courbet and the realists: "Tout bon poëte fut toujours réaliste. . . .

La Poésie est ce qu'il y a de plus réel, c'est ce qui n'est complètement vrai que dans un autre monde" (P., 636-637).

The locus par excellence where the dialectic between illusion and reality is represented is the theatre, for the spectacle of the theatre is, by its very nature, hybrid, partaking, as Barthes explains in his essay entitled "Le Théâtre de Baudelaire," both of the empirical and the hyperbolic or "surreal":

> Le corps de l'acteur est artificiel, mais sa duplicité est bien autrement profonde que celle des décors peints ou des meubles faux du théâtre; le fard, l'emprunt des gestes ou des intonations, la disponibilité d'un corps exposé, tout cela est artificiel, mais non factice, et rejoint par là ce léger dépassement, de saveur exquise, essentielle, par lequel Baudelaire a défini le pouvoir des paradis artificiels: l'acteur porte en lui la surprécision même d'un monde excessif, comme celui du haschisch, où rien n'est inventé, mais où tout existe dans une intensité multipliée. On peut deviner par là que Baudelaire avait le sens aigu de la théâtralité la plus secrète et aussi la plus troublante, celle qui met l'acteur au centre du prodige théâtral et constitue le théâtre comme le lieu d'une ultra-incarnation, où le corps est double, à la fois corps vivant venu d'une nature triviale, et corps emphatique, solonnel, glacé par sa fonction d'objet artificiel.[3]

The theatre, in its attempt to suspend reality, proposes nevertheless the verification of illusion; whilst an illusion, the theatre takes reality as its point de repère. But fiction and reality do not comprise neat categories. Rather, the object of aesthetic dissimulation is reality: the object of illusion is disillusionment. We go to the theatre, or we enter the theatrical world of fiction, in order to ascertain how to enter the Theatre of Life. Julian Beck and Judith Malina describe as follows the paradox of fiction--or is it the paradox of reality?

> Why do we go to the theatre?
> To crack your head open and let in the oxygen. To revivify the brain, inform the senses, awaken the body, consciousness physical and mental, to what's happening to you, the person watching. To go beyond watching into action. To find the keys to salvation (a ceremony in which the actor serves as guide). To find out how to enter The Theatre of Life. To enter The Theatre of Daily Life.[4]

In this paradox is contained the very essence of the clown as metaphysical questioner.[5] Indeed, it is this rôle which is adopted by Deburau's famous Pierrot, whose inquisitive apprehension of the mundane, everyday world as fantastic may be seen to symbolize the problems of adaptation faced by the new urban proletariat of the 1840's.[6]

In the Romantic ironist we have remarked a definite propensity towards illusion: the Romantic ironist is, as Weinberg explains, a *jongleur*, conjuring up, in the theatre of the mind, the magical world of illusion:

> Le poète serait donc une sorte de Merlin, capable de prendre n'importe quelle apparence; magicien qui, à travers ses métamorphoses, sonde les replis les plus secrets du coeur humain. Le poète se veut autre qu'il n'est, mais tout en restant fidèle à sa propre nature.[7]

However, whilst we discover in the work of the Romantic ironist a poetry which first and foremost protests against reality, we discover also that that very same poetry ultimately contests itself in the name of that reality which it had originally spurned. This is achieved through the hyperconsciousness of the artist who posits a fiction which his consciousness ultimately destroys in the dialectical moment. Jankélévitch analyses as follows the grand orgy of chaos and confusion instituted by the Romantic ironist's hyperconsciousness, or, what may be termed his consciousness of consciousness:

> On ressent ce vertige à la lecture d'un Märchen romantique: les catégories apolliniennes de Fiction et de Vérité, d'"acteur" et de "spectateur" chavirent dans le sabbat des éléments; . . . les machinistes et le public montent sur les planches, et l'illusion est détruite par celui-là même qui l'a créée. Pirandello est passé virtuose dans ce genre d'équivoque. Dans Le Soulier de satin, Claudel désire que les décors soient placés ou enlevés sous les yeux du public, pour qu'il soit bien manifeste que le songe est un songe; et le spectateur consent au malentendu. . . . Partout la conscience du spectacle gêne le spectacle. . . . Hegel a lourdement raillé cette humeur lunatique qui extermine toute substantialité et qui joue avec le néant. . . . Du théâtre sur le théâtre, une philosophie de la philosophie, une "poésie transcendantale" qui est, selon Fr. Schlegel, poésie de la poésie, --tels sont les exposants du vertige romantique, tels sont les produits et sous-produits d'une conscience de soi incapable de retrouver sa simplicité et sa naïveté premières.[8]

Baudelaire, like the Romantic ironist, was fascinated by the illusory spectacle of art with its hybrid nature, its mimetic qualities as well as its powers of transfiguration. His theories on modernism are based on these perceptions. Like the Romantic ironist, he too attempted to demarcate "la ligne de séparation du faux front d'avec le véritable" (Le Poëme du haschisch, P., 364). Poetry, for him, is likewise utopian; it is a fiction which derives its very being from its contrapuntal existence:

> C'est une grande destinée que celle de la poésie! Joyeuse ou lamentable, elle porte toujours en soi le divin caractère utopique. Elle contredit sans cesse le fait, à peine de ne plus être. Dans le cachot, elle se fait révolte; à la fenêtre de l'hôpital, elle est ardente espérance de guérison; dans la mansarde déchirée et malpropre, elle se pare comme une fée du luxe et de l'élégance; non seulement elle constate, mais elle répare. Partout elle se fait négation de l'iniquité. (Pierre Dupont, P., 614)

Poetry comes into being through its denial of reality (le fait). Suggested here is Baudelaire's theory of "surnaturalisme," that is to say, the creation of the spectacle of art from contingent reality

("Dans certains états de l'âme presque surnaturels, la profondeur de la vie se révèle toute entière dans le spectacle, si ordinaire qu'il soit, qu'on a sous les yeux," Fusées, P., 1257). In the extract from his article on Pierre Dupont, we are faced with a nice problem of grammar in the line: "Elle contredit sans cesse le fait, à peine de ne plus être": if the antecedent of the prepositional phrase is poetry, I would take this line to mean that the act of poetry implies the negation of reality, and that if this factor is ignored, then the work created can no longer be poetry. If, on the other hand, the antecedent is "le fait," the negation of reality is still the prime factor in the creation of poetry, which must contradict the fact so that it (the fact) hardly exists any more. Whichever interpretation we accept, the fact remains that in Poetry, the fact cannot remain.

Poetry is, essentially, the creation of a fictitious universe, and, to this extent, the art of poetry may be compared to that of the actor. In his Salon de 1859, Baudelaire explicitly states the affinities between "le poëte, le comédien et l'artiste" (P., 1045)[9]: all dwell in the realms of fiction, and all possess the powers of creation and destruction associated with the Romantic ironist:

> . . . la religion étant la plus haute fiction de l'esprit humain, . . . elle réclame de ceux qui se vouent à l'expression de ses actes et de ses sentiments l'imagination la plus vigoureuse et les efforts les plus tendus. Ainsi le personnage de Polyeucte exige du poëte et du comédien une ascension spirituelle et un enthousiasme beaucoup plus vif que tel personnage vulgaire épris d'une vulgaire créature de la terre, ou même qu'un héros purement politique. La seule concession qu'on puisse raisonnablement faire aux partisans de la théorie qui considère la foi comme l'unique source d'inspiration religieuse, est que le poëte, le comédien et l'artiste, au moment où ils exécutent l'ouvrage en question, croient à la réalité de ce qu'ils représentent,

> échauffés qu'ils sont par la nécessité. Ainsi l'art est le seul domaine spirituel où l'homme puisse dire: "Je croirai si je veux, et si je ne veux pas, je ne croirai pas."
> (P., 1045-1046)

The problem of solipsism will be taken up later in the discussion pertaining to the histrionic posture of the artist. A variation on the theme of the poet-_comédien_ may be found in the following extract from the _Journaux intimes_:

> Etant enfant, je voulais être tantôt pape, mais pape militaire, tantôt comédien. (P., 1296)

Both vocations imply, of necessity, a propensity towards fiction, and a negation of reality.

Both poetry and the theatre are founded upon the imaginative faculty of the artist whose function it is to realize the unreal, to give substance to the airy nothingness of his imagination in the dialectical interplay between reality and fiction. It is incumbent upon the imagination to materialize a type of "néant": "Le poète," writes Baudelaire in his monograph on Poe of 1856, "a plus que tous les hommes ce merveilleux privilège . . . de savoir se parer avec un rien."[10] The imaginative act, as Sartre[11] explains in _L'Idiot de la famille_--a theory which he had already elaborated in _L'Imagination_, _L'Imaginaire_, and _L'Etre et le néant_--is founded upon the principle of unreality, inasmuch as the creation of an image implies the negative dialectical interplay of fiction and reality: in order to imagine an object, the mind cannot have in view a real object, but simply its "analogon," that is to say, the symbolical construct based upon the real object:

> Nul ne peut jouer la comédie sans se laisser ronger tout entier et publiquement par l'imaginaire. L'acte imageant, pris dans sa généralité, est celui d'une conscience qui vise un objet absent ou inexistant à travers une certaine réalité que j'ai nommée ailleurs analogon et qui fonctionne non comme un signe mais comme un symbole, c'est-à-dire comme la matérialisation de l'objet visé. Matérialiser ne signifie pas ici réaliser, mais au contraire irréaliser le matériau par la fonction qu'on lui assigne.[12]

This negative affirmation of reality would appear to be irony incarnate. "Dans l'ironie," writes Sartre in L'Etre et le néant, "l'homme anéantit, dans l'unité d'un même acte, ce qu'il pose."[13]

This ironic imagistic function lies at the very heart of language, and especially poetic language: the system of language must be both subsumed and undermined in the creative act, its being both negated and surpassed. For clarification on this point, we turn to Barthes' description of what he so aptly terms "la réalité irréelle du langage":

> Ces simples mots sont eux-mêmes des valeurs, ils ont un passé, des entours, leur sens naît peut-être moins de leur rapport à l'objet qu'ils signifient que de leur rapport à d'autres mots, à la fois voisins et différents: et c'est précisément dans cette zone de sur-signification seconde, que va se loger et se développer la littérature. Autrement dit, par rapport aux objets eux-mêmes, la littérature est fondamentalement, constitutivement irréaliste; la littérature, c'est l'irréel même; ou plus exactement, bien loin d'être une copie analogique du réel, la littérature est au contraire la conscience même de l'irréel du langage: la littérature la plus "vraie" c'est celle qui se sait la plus irréelle, dans la mesure où elle se sait essentiellement langage.[14]

Language is not only unreal as concerns its value as signifier, its function as intermediary between concept and conceptualization, it is also unreal in the sense that, like Keats' chameleon poet, it has no essential core; it is a pregnant nothingness, whose being lies not so much in its concrete status, but rather in its fluid rapport both with the external world and with its internal structure, that is to say, its syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships.[15] It is in this light that we can now understand the full significance of Albert Giraud's[16] vision of language as mask, as bespangled harlequin. Similarly, Yeats' poem entitled "A Coat," depicts the linguistic mask of aesthetic creation.[17] Like the mask, the principle of which lies in the power of transfiguration and ironic dépassement which at one and the same time both affirms and denies reality,[18] language too is both stance and substance.

This ironic process is not limited to language alone, but permeates the very nature of thought, for every concept in the mind is, in fact, a fiction: what the mind conceives does not correspond with what it perceives; the process of selection and abstraction is brought to bear upon man's attempt to internalize, through thought, the external world. Much as the artist relies upon the systematization of language in the creation of poetry, so does man's conceptualization imply a given system of meaning, which he both affirms and negates in his attempt at re-synthesizing the world. Conceptualization is not naming per se, but rather naming in order to un-name and hence re-name.

The art of criticism itself is not without its histrionic qualities, for the critical act relies, too, on the positing of imaginary parameters. Just as the actor assimilates a hypothetical being in the enactment of his rôle, so, too, the critic must creatively assimilate the work of the author. It is for this reason that Baudelaire demands that the critic be receptive to the work through the manifestation of his own sensibilities ("La critique doit être partiale, passionnée," Salon de 1846, P., 877). This principle is admirably illustrated in Baudelaire's highly subjective appreciation of the poet Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, where his Einfühlung with the poet translates itself in the symbol of the Romantic English garden ("Ainsi le meilleur compte rendu d'un tableau pourra être un sonnet ou une élégie," ibid.). In his article on the socialist poet and chansonnier Pierre Dupont, who, incidentally, was present with Baudelaire at the première of Champfleury's pantomime Pierrot valet de la mort,[19] Baudelaire states quite explicitly the histrionic principle of identification which is a constituent element of the art of criticism:

> Il vous faut donc, pour bien représenter l'oeuvre, entrer dans la peau de l'être créé, vous pénétrer profondément des sentiments qu'il exprime, et les si bien sentir, qu'il vous semble que ce soit votre oeuvre propre. Il faut s'assimiler une oeuvre pour la bien exprimer. (P., 614-615)

Similarly, Baudelaire notes Samuel's "faculté comédienne" (P., 487), which may be equated with the mimetic propensity in the reader, who, like the critic, is obliged to adopt, histrionically, the rôle of the creative artist:

> Il était à la fois tous les artistes qu'il avait étudiés et tous les livres qu'il avait lus, et cependant, en dépit de cette faculté comédienne, restait profondément originel. (ibid.)

The reader too, in his time, plays many parts. Hugo von Hofmannstahl describes as follows the histrionic posture of the reader:

> Quand s'éveille mystérieusement la productivité positive, en un jour qui n'est pas comme les autres, sous un vent et un soleil qui ne ressemblent pas au vent et au soleil coutumiers, le personnage oblige l'acteur à jouer; celui-ci ne fait point acte de volonté, il obéit à un commandement: "Aujourd'hui tu me liras et je vivrai en toi." Déjà, ce commandement est sensible dans une image productive. Cette image heureuse, le lecteur se trouve obligé de la jouer, de la vivre dans le sens de l'imagination active qui lui a donné la vie.[20]

The mimetic technique of the reader is paralleled by the position of the spectator or auditor, who must likewise attempt an equivalence with the work of art through feeling himself into its very fabric. Describing the reaction of the public to Tannhäuser, Baudelaire notes: "il faut le [le public] replacer dans un état analogue à la situation actuelle" (P., 1230). But the analogon created by the reader or spectator is but an analogon of the analogon which is the work of art; he is but a secondary translator, "le traducteur d'une traduction" (P., 1166), as Baudelaire expresses it in Le Peintre de la vie moderne. Appreciation is the metaphor of a metaphor: it is what Poulet, in his analysis of the histrionic procedures underlying both aesthetic creation and literary criticism, aptly terms "analogie d'une analogie, réflexion d'une réflexion."[21] Indeed, to what extent, one wonders, is the critical enterprise quixotic?

The mimetic procedure which constitutes the act of criticism lies also at the heart of aesthetic creation: both are based on the principle of identification and both are equally histrionic. "Cette assimilation," writes Poulet, ". . . n'est pas différente non plus de celle de l'acteur mimant tel geste, afin de ressentir à l'intérieur de lui-même le sentiment auquel ce geste correspond."[22] In his prose poem entitled "Les Foules," which is a kind of pièce à thèse or aesthetic credo, Baudelaire states quite explicitly the affiliation of the mimetic disposition of the artist with that of the actor:

> Le poëte jouit de cet incomparable privilège, qu'il peut à sa guise être lui-même et autrui. Comme ces âmes errantes qui cherchent un corps, il entre, quand il veut, dans le personnage de chacun. Pour lui seul tout est vacant; et si de certaines places paraissent lui être fermées, c'est qu'à ses yeux elles ne valent pas la peine d'être visitées.

> Le promeneur solitaire et pensif tire une singulière ivresse de cette universelle communion. Celui-là qui épouse facilement la foule connaît des jouissances fiévreuses, dont seront éternellement privés l'égoïste, fermé comme un coffre, et le paresseux, interné comme un mollusque. Il adopte comme siennes toutes les professions, toutes les joies et toutes les misères que la circonstance lui présente. (P., 244)

"Les Foules" clearly outlines the histrionic principle governing aesthetic creation in its analysis of the protean nature of the artist, his hermetic self-sufficiency and his vain attempt to transcend the confines of his tautological self. However, his attempt to establish an equilibrium between self and world ("C'est un _moi_ insatiable du _non-moi_," _Le Peintre de la vie moderne_, P., 1161) topples into egocentricity as he capitalizes, in his drunken megalomania, on the world as an occasion for his own self-realization. Insofar as it is not the external world, but rather his own self-abandonment, to which the subject abandons himself ("_Amabam amare_, disait Saint Augustin. 'J'aime passionnément la passion,' dirait volontiers M.G.," ibid., P., 1160), he does not abandon his tautological self ("la vaporisation," _Mon Coeur mis à nu_, P., 1271), but tends rather to remain caught up in the contemplation of his own feeling. The feeling of feeling thus automatically precludes the attempt to identify with, or adopt the rôle of the other, and merely constitutes a detour, via the other, back to the egocentric self.

A similar type of self-indulgent orgy is presented in the final section of _Le Poëme du haschisch_, where we see the drug-taker at the height of his self-admiring intoxication: ". . . toutes ces choses ont été créées pour moi, pour moi, pour moi! Pour moi, l'humanité a travaillé, a été martyrisée, immolée--, pour servir de pâture, de *pabulum* à mon implacable appétit d'émotion, de connaissance et de beauté!" (P., 382).[23] The artist, like the drug-taker, makes the world his *pabulum*: he plays with it, subordinating it to his wilful caprice. Can we not recognize here the playful *jonglerie* of the Romantic ironist? Bourgeois outlines as follows the kinship between the liberated consciousness of the Romantic artist and the protean nature of the actor: the Romantic artist, like the actor, possesses the capacity to adopt all rôles ("il entre, quand il veut, dans le personnage de chacun," P., 244):

> Cette liberté romantique de l'esprit n'est pas autre chose que la liberté de l'art parfait du comédien, qui ne s'identifie sérieusement à aucun rôle, mais ne fait que jouer avec chacun. Et une forme capitale de la plaisanterie romantique est la mobilité (Wandelbarkeit) qui fuit devant tout sérieux dans une autre perspective. Son symbole est Protée, celui qu'on ne peut saisir nulle part, celui qui va d'une forme à l'autre, celui qui joue avec toutes, et ne se rend cependant maître d'aucune.[24]

Does Baudelaire also not acclaim "l'art sublime du comédien" (*Salon de 1859*, P., 1034), and does he not state in his monograph on Pierre Dupont: "tout poëte véritable doit être une incarnation" (P., 606)?

But if, as Baudelaire states in a letter to his mother of 9 January 1856, "Le propre des poètes . . . est de savoir sortir d'eux-mêmes, et comprendre une toute autre nature," this goal proves illusory, for the holy communion which is the "sainte prostitution de l'âme" (P., 244) is precluded by the centripetal movement reinstated by the ever-present consciousness of the artist. The artist thus forestalls any accusation of prostitution which, as defined by Baudelaire, encompasses nothing less than the whole world beyond the confines of the tautological self ("Qu'est-ce que l'art? Prostitution. . . . Le goût de la concentration productive doit remplacer, chez un homme mur, le goût de la déperdition," Fusées, P., 1247). Rather, Baudelaire advocates a particular kind of prostitution whereby everything depends on the manner in which the self operates an egocentric or centripetal form of multiplication ("L'homme de génie veut être un, et se prostituer d'une manière particulière," Mon Coeur mis à nu, P., 1294), as he remains true to his ideal of hermetic self-sufficiency. Ironically, prostitution is indispensable to the artist's concentration. There is an indissoluble reciprocity between these dualistic opposites. Identity itself ("centralisation," P., 1271) can, in fact, only be consolidated in and through its self-prostitution ("De la vaporisation et la centralisation du Moi. Tout est là," ibid.). Ironically, too, the conscious, unilateral quest for experience, itself symptomatic of the artist's solipsistic crisis, risks being caught up in the subjectivity it sought initially to elude. "Etre hors de chez soi" is thus coterminous with "se sentir partout chez soi" (Le Peintre de la vie moderne, P., 1160). The odyssey of the histrio-jongleur towards the self cannot but prove negative.

The quest for selfhood, however, leads to the ultimate realization that the self does not exist: there exists only a histrio or rather a multiplicity of selves.[25] The motif of the chameleon poet does not, of course, originate with Baudelaire. One might profitably compare the protean character of the Baudelairian histrio with the description of the chameleon poet in Keats' celebrated letter to Richard Woodhouse of 27 October 1818:

> As to the poetical Character itself, (I mean that sort of which I am a Member; that sort distinguished from the Wordsworthian or egotistical sublime; which is a thing per se and stands alone) it is not itself--it has no self--it is everything and nothing--It has no character--it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated--It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher, delights the camelion Poet. . . . A Poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence; because he has no Identity--he is continually in for--and filling some other Body--The Sun, the Moon, the Sea and Men and Women who are creatures of impulse are poetical and have about them an unchangeable attribute--the poet has none; no identity--he is certainly the most unpoetical of God's creatures, If then he has no self, and if I am a Poet, where is the wonder that I should say I would write no more? . . . It is a wretched thing to confess; but is a very fact that not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature--how can it, when I have no nature? When I am in a room with People if I ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then not myself goes home to myself: but the identity of everyone in the room begins to press upon me that, I am in a very little time annihilated...[26]

Both Baudelaire and Keats envisage the poet as entering the bodies of others: for both, the essence of the poet lies in his lack of an essential core. The being of the poet resides not in the fixity of his identity as an "unchangeable attribute" but, on the contrary, in his powers of fluctuation. There is, however, an unmistakable difference between the two: the elastic character of the Keatsian poet allows him to adopt a spurious kind of identity as he merges with the rôles he chooses to play. The Baudelairian poet, on the other hand, embodies the spirit of Diderot's "comédien": for him there is no fusion with his rôle, simply the cerebral donning of a multiplicity of masks ("Ni vieux, ni jeune, il est. Il est ce qu'il veut," Letter to Jules Janin, P., 806). Whereas the Keatsian poet, like the chameleon, blends into his background, the Baudelairian poet absorbs the background into his being. It is for this reason that, strictly speaking, one cannot apply the notion of the chameleon poet to Baudelaire. Also, Baudelaire is far from seeing the poet's elasticity as evidence of his "unpoetical" character. Rather, for Baudelaire, the histrionic principle is the very essence (if one can speak of an essence in this context) of the poet:

> Ivresse d'humanité.
> Grand tableau à faire:
> Dans le sens de la charité.
> Dans le sens du libertinage.
> Dans le sens littéraire, ou du comédien.
> (Mon Coeur mis à nu, P., 1277)

Baudelaire had noted earlier, in his monograph on the actor Philibert Rouvière: "Tantôt le poète cherche son comédien . . .; tantôt le comédien soupire après son poëte" (P., 573).

The accomplishment of the actor, like that of the artist, lies, as Baudelaire explains in his Salon de 1859, in his protean disposition, in his ability to multiply himself into varying rôles:

> Quand je vois un bon portrait, je devine tous les efforts de l'artiste, qui a dû voir d'abord ce qui se faisait voir, mais aussi deviner ce qui se cachait. Je le comparais tout à l'heure à l'historien, je pourrais aussi le comparer au comédien, qui par devoir adopte tous les caractères et tous les costumes. (P., 1072)

A similar illustration of the histrionic muse of the artist may be found in Baudelaire's description of the mimetic faculties of the painter Guys:

> Un régiment passe, qui va peut-être au bout du monde, jetant dans l'air des boulevards ses fanfares entraînantes et légères comme l'espérance; et voilà l'oeil de M.G. a déjà vu, inspecté, analysé les armes, l'allure et la physionomie de cette troupe. Harnachements, scintillements, musique, regards décidés, moustaches lourdes et sérieuses, tout cela entre pêle-mêle en lui; et dans quelques minutes, le poëme qui en résulte sera virtuellement composé. Et voilà que son âme vit avec l'âme de ce régiment...
> (P., 1161-1162)

Though the above example illustrates the spontaneous and almost involuntary aspect of aesthetic histrionism, it is important to realize that the principle of mimicry is essentially of a voluntary nature. In this context, one is reminded of the Stanislavsky method of acting. Echoing a passage from Poe's The Purloined Letter, Baudelaire notes the following in connection with the celebrated actor Rouvière:

> Quand je veux savoir jusqu'à quel point quelqu'un est circonspect ou stupide, jusqu'à quel point il est bon ou méchant, ou quelles sont actuellement ses pensées, je compose mon visage d'après le sien, aussi exactement que possible, et j'attends alors pour savoir quels pensers ou quels sentiments naîtront dans mon esprit ou dans mon coeur, comme pour s'appareiller et correspondre avec ma physionomie. (Le Comédien Rouvière, P., 576)

Voluntary histrionism proves, on occasion, incomplete, giving rise to a hybrid art form, at one and the same time subjective and objective. The artist can achieve only partial communion with the rôle. Describing Flaubert's histrionic method of composition, Baudelaire notes in his article on Madame Bovary:

> In ne restait plus à l'auteur, pour accomplir le tour de force dans son entier, que de se dépouiller (autant que possible) de son sexe et de se faire femme. Il en est résulté une merveille; c'est que malgré tout son zèle de comédien, il n'a pas pu ne pas infuser un sang viril dans les veines de sa créature. (P., 652)

This example is particularly instructive in this post-formalist era, as it raises the whole question of the relationship of the writer to his work, and the extent to which the work may be considered an expression of the man. Although here Baudelaire suggests that the artist cannot but help projecting himself into his work, he does elsewhere invoke (apart from the celebrated dictum of the author concerning self-contradiction) the artist's inalienable right to the rôle of the "parfait comédien" ("Fidèle à son douloureux programme, l'auteur des Fleurs du mal a dû, en parfait comédien, façonner son esprit à tous les sophismes comme à toutes les corruptions," Note prefacing "La Révolte," P., 1557). This text should be read in conjunction with the famous letter to Ancelle of 18 February 1866, where Baudelaire, in the rôle of the jongleur, seemingly protests his sincerity (Corr., II, 610).

Like that composite and factitious being, the dandy, the writer cannot appear in public without his make-up, without his mask. "Quiconque écrit des maximes," writes Baudelaire in his Choix de maximes consolantes sur l'amour, published in Le Corsaire Satan of 3 March 1846, "aime charger son caractère; les jeunes se griment, --les vieux s'adonisent" (P., 470). Although there is somewhat of an ambiguity here, we understand the closing statement as a kind of amplificatio, referring to the histrionic nature of the writer with his "goût du travestissement et du masque" ("Les Foules," P., 243). It is interesting to note the theatrical allusion in the verb "griment": whilst "se grimer" refers to the art of make-up, "un grime" is a theatrical term used to refer to the rôle of the dotard. Just as the old man imagines himself a youthful Adonaïs, so the young man too can metamorphose himself into the old dotard. The writer is endowed with the capacity to "absorber toutes les facultés" (Le Peintre de la vie moderne, P., 1161). That the art of the writer is associated with that of the histrio would be confirmed by the cosmetic nature of art ("Que la poësie se rattache aux arts de la peinture, de la cuisine et du cosmétique," Preface to Les Fleurs du mal, P., 186).

Baudelaire, in fact, constructs a virtual world view from the thrill and pride of vicarious living; witness such works as "Les Petites Vieilles" ("Mon coeur multiplié jouit de tous vos vices!/ Mon âme resplendit de toutes vos vertus!," P., 87), "Les Veuves" ("Je ne puis jamais m'empêcher de jeter un regard, sinon universellement sympathique, au moins curieux, sur la foule de parias qui se pressent autour de l'enceinte d'un concert public," P., 246) or "Les Projets" ("Pourquoi contraindre mon corps à changer de place, puisque mon âme voyage si lestement?," P., 266). The latter example clearly illustrates the hermetic nature of the histrionic universe. The aesthetic universe is a world unto itself; it is like a movie screen onto which are projected the fantasies of the artist ("nos esprits tendus comme une toile," "Le Voyage," P., 124), where the artist is at one and the same time the projection and the projectionist:

> Dans la Thébaïde que mon cerveau s'est faite, . . . je dispute parfois avec des monstres grotesques, des hantises du plein jour. (Salon de 1859, P., 1071)

Aesthetic histrionism has definite affinities with idealism (". . . les drames sérieux qui se jouent dans un seul cerveau," Théophile Gautier, P., 619).[27]

The poem "La Béatrice" offers a distinct portrait of the artist-as-*histrio*. It is a bitterly ironic condemnation of the histrionics (in both senses of the word) of art and artist by the poet-as-actor-of-himself. The artist mocks himself as a fool, a mere *histrio*, on two counts: the social and the psychological. To what extent, the poet in "La Béatrice" wonders, is he capitalizing on his private sorrow, which has become a commodity to be sold in the market place? It is the theme of "La Muse vénale."[28] If he feels that the public parading of his private feelings is a prostitution of himself, the "amuseur du public" also feels himself to be a histrïo through his inability to be sincere, through the attitudinizing of his true sentiments:

> --"Contemplons à loisir cette caricature
> Et cette ombre d'Hamlet imitant sa posture,
> Le regard indécis et les cheveux aux vent.
> N'est-ce pas grand'pitié de voir ce bon vivant,
> Ce gueux, cet histrion en vacances, ce drôle,
> Parce qu'il sait jouer artistement son rôle,
> Vouloir intéresser au chant de ses douleurs
> Les aigles, les grillons, les ruisseaux et les fleurs,
> Et même à nous, auteurs de ces vieilles rubriques,
> Réciter en hurlant ses tirades publiques?"
> (P., 110-111)

Could one not see here a satire of Romantic posturing? For the Romantics, intimate self-revelation has all too easily turned into vulgar self-dramatization, or rather self-melodramatization.[29] Self-expression has become the consciousness of self-expression, much as the creation of poetry has become the poetry of poetry. Both poem and poet bear the indelible stamp of the histrio. "Bien plus que le culte de l'individu," writes Camus in L'Homme révolté, "le romantisme inaugure le culte du personnage."[30] The Romantic period was, undoubtedly, to quote a contemporary novelist of the period by the name of Philadelphe-Maurice Alhoy, "une époque poseuse."[31] Attitudinizing was a constituent element both of the aesthetic and the social fabric: witness, for example, the deliberately outré clowning of the Jeunes-France or the decadents of the fin de siècle. The following sketch appears in a contemporary work entitled Un Anglais à Paris: Notes et souvenirs, 1835-1848:

> Etant très petit garçon, j'avais été plus d'une fois frappé d'étonnement à la vue de jeunes gens paradant dans les rues en pourpoint, en hauts de chausses, la chevelure flottante ornée de toques de velours et d'ailes d'oiseaux, une courte épée pendue à la ceinture; nous n'étions pas au carnaval et personne ne semblait s'émouvoir; les Parisiens d'alors s'étaient habitués à ces bizarreries. Cet amour des excentricités se manifestait aussi dans le langage des jeunes artistes.[32]

The poet-histrio of "La Béatrice," like the Prince of Elsinore to whom he compares himself, is tormented by a hyperconscious lucidity: this gives rise to his ironic self-portrait. What we see here is the poet as spectator of himself in the act of reflection, sharpening the dagger of his thought upon his heart ("Et que de ma pensée, . . ./J'aiguisais lentement sur mon coeur le poignard," P., 110). Whilst he identifies himself with Shakespeare's spiritually embattled hero ("The native hue of resolution/Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," Act III, sc. i) on account of his clairvoyancy and his tragic irresolution ("le regard indécis," P., 110), the Hamlet metaphor suggests also the rôle in which he imagined others saw him: the condemnatory "regard d'autrui" is symbolized in the mocking demons ("Je les entendis rire," P., 110), for whom the poet-actor is but a "caricature," an "ombre d'Hamlet," a "drôle"--in short a cabotin. The mockery is, indeed, double-edged: whilst the poet is mocked as a histrionic fool by society, his real crucifixion takes place at the hands of his Muse, his infernal Béatrice. Here we have a re-enactment of the aesthetic humiliation of "Le Fou et la Vénus." In the caricatural self-portrait of the artist dédoublé is embodied not only a social, but, more importantly, a personal critique. It is the "sinistre miroir" (P., 74) of self-consciousness.

"Les Sept Vieillards," published in La Revue Contemporaine of 15 September 1859, suggests also an ironic self-portrait of the artist-as-histrio or anti-hero. The poem is an oblique aesthetic credo. Like the poet-histrio of "La Béatrice," the self-reflecting poet ("discutant avec mon âme," P., 83) recounts the rôle he played in the existential drama presented in the poem. His is the rôle of the hero ("roidissant mes nerfs comme un héros," ibid.), or so he thinks. His conduct, alas, belies his pretensions, as we see him, in the final verses, very unheroically going to pieces. The actor has not proved equal to the drama of life or, indeed, of art.

The hallucinatory setting for the existential drama, whilst symbolizing man's clouded ontological vision, stands also for an aesthetic principle: the distortion produced by the dirty yellow fog embodies the principle of aesthetic simulation or transformation.[33] The work of art is thus projected as stage décor in which the poet-as-actor-of-himself-in-the-rôle-of-artist makes his appearance:

> Un matin, cependant que dans la triste rue
> Les maisons, dont la brume allongeait la hauteur,
> Simulaient les deux quais d'une rivière accrue,
> Et que, décor semblable à l'âme de l'acteur,
>
> Un brouillard sale et jaune inondait tout l'espace,
> Je suivais, roidissant mes nerfs comme un héros
> Et discutant avec mon âme déjà lasse,
> Le faubourg secoué par les lourds tomberaux.
> (P., 83)

The dislocated syntax mirrors the aesthetic distortion. On the allegorical level, this scene represents the quest of the artist-hero, whether for a subject (one might interpose here the haphazard poetic finds of the poet-clown in "Le Soleil"), whether for clarification of that subject or its re-presentation, or, finally, the quest for meaning--in life or in art.

If Baudelaire, on occasion, projects the artist into the rôle of the megalomaniac conjuror endowed with spiritual omnipotence, he is, nevertheless, profoundly aware of the illusory nature of art. Hence his ridiculing, as we have seen, of the pretensions of the artist by casting him in the rôle of the histrio. Baudelaire adopts this theatrical metaphor, for the theatre-as-illusion is the very symbol of duplicity, and the actor necessarily the perfect imposter, despite his pretence at verisimilitude. "L'acteur," writes Auger-Duvignaud, "c'est l'hypocrite. . . . Jouer un personnage. Habiter un être que l'on n'est point et surtout, par ce moyen emporter l'adhésion des autres hommes. L'acteur incarne des conduites imaginaires. . . ."[34] Art, like the theatre, is a form of dissimulation, a wily form of charlatanry. Does not Baudelaire, in his projected preface for the third edition of Les Fleurs du mal, speak of "le charlatanisme indispensable dans l'amalgame de l'oeuvre" (P., 188), and, in Quelques Caricaturistes étrangers, of "le charlatanisme de certains artistes" (P., 1021)?[35]

Art is, in the final analysis, "un masque, un décor suborneur" (P., 22). In the poem "Le Masque," published in La Revue Contemporaine of 30 November 1859, Baudelaire denounces the perfidious deception that is art with its double face, symbolized in the statue by Ernest Christophe which represents a majestic and elegant woman, whose harmonious countenance is a mask covering the distorted grimace of her real face:

O blasphème de l'art! ô surprise fatale!
La femme au corps divin, promettant le bonheur,
Par le haut se termine en monstre bicéphale!
--Mais non! ce n'est qu'un masque, un décor suborneur,
Ce visage éclairé d'une exquise grimace,
Et, regarde, voici, crispée atrocement,
La véritable tête, et la sincère face
Renversée à l'abri de la face qui ment.
(P., 22-23)

The work of art is a bicephalic monster (is this not a variation on the theme of the "psyle"?). The allegory of the masked statue stands for the ironic dialectic between aesthetic idealism and contingent reality. The essence of art lies not in the ideal transcendence of reality, but rather in the simultaneous coexistence of the two, "l'incessant mécanisme de la vie terrestre, taquinant et déchirant à chaque minute l'étoffe de la vie idéale" (La Double Vie, P., 658). The essence of the work of art lies then in the mask. Art is a lie. The liar that is the poet cannot, however, give credence to his own lie: he is profoundly aware that art is, after all, a beautiful "mensonge," despite the fact that he would like to believe in it ("Laissez, laissez mon coeur s'enivrer d'un mensonge," "Semper Eadem," P., 39). If, as the poet affirms in "Le Masque," he can get drunk on the lie which the statue represents for him ("ton mensonge m'enivre," P., 23), it is not only the lie of the beatific vision to which he is referring: he has also in mind the mendacious illusion born of the fundamental duplicity of all art.

On the anagogical level, the dissimulation of art bears comparison with what Baudelaire calls "le masque universel" (P., 1095). Describing a figurine by Christophe in the Salon de 1859, Baudelaire notes: "Ce qui avait d'abord enchanté vos yeux, c'était un masque, c'était le masque universel, votre masque, mon masque, joli éventail, dont une main habile se sert pour voiler aux yeux du monde la douleur ou le remords" (P., 1095). As in "Les Sept Vieillards," the metaphysical mask fuses with the aesthetic mask. Indeed, the latter may be considered to mask the former, as Baudelaire indicates in "Hymne à la beauté":

Que tu viennes du ciel ou de l'enfer, qu'importe,
O Beauté! monstre énorme, effrayant, ingénu!
Si ton oeil, ton souris, ton pied, m'ouvrent la porte
D'un infini que j'aime et n'ai jamais connu?
(P., 24)

"L'Amour du mensonge," published in La Revue Contemporaine of 15 May 1860, offers a variation on the theme of aesthetic illusion. It is not without significance that the poem was inspired by the actress Marie Daubrun. Indeed, the first two verses can only be understood in a theatrical context: what we have here is an evocation of the actress on stage, under the fierce glare of the theatre lights and the blare of the orchestra:

Quand je te vois passer, ô ma chère indolente,
Au chant des instruments qui se brise au plafond
Suspendant ton allure harmonieuse et lente,
Et promenant l'ennui de ton regard profond;

Quand je contemple, aux feux du gaz qui le colore,
Ton front pâle, embelli par un morbide attrait,
Où les torches du soir allument une aurore,
Et tes yeux attirants comme ceux d'un portrait.
(P., 94)

One should remember, here, the initial title of the poem, "Le Décor," and also the following epigraph which accompanied the original manuscript:

> Même elle avait encor cet éclat emprunté
> Dont elle eut soin de peindre et d'orner son visage
> Pour réparer des ans l'irréparable outrage.
> (Racine, Athalie)

For Baudelaire, the terms "décor" and "amour du mensonge" are synonymous. This poem should be read in the context of Baudelaire's celebrated "Eloge du maquillage." In both works, Baudelaire stresses not only the importance of artifice, but, more importantly, a consciousness of that artifice: "il importe peu que la ruse et l'artifice soient connus de tous" (Le Peintre de la vie moderne, P., 1184).

> Mais ne suffit-il pas que tu sois l'apparence,
> Pour réjouir un coeur qui fuit la vérité?
> . . . .
> Masque ou décor, salut! J'adore ta beauté.
> (P., 95)

The artist is not the dupe of his own pretensions, nor does he aspire to a "willing suspension of disbelief." Even if art is a lie, the artful awareness of the artifice lends truth to the "mensonge" that is art. Art is the truest lie of all .

The type of aesthetic "mensonge," whereby the awareness of the illusion somehow counteracts the "mensonge," must be contrasted with the illusion that is an artless lie, that is to say, the illusion which belies the true sentiments of the artist, as is the case with the artist who ignores his own feelings and merely adopts the vulgar and banal ideas of Everyman. His is a true illusion in the pejorative sense of the term. It is to the theatre that Baudelaire turns once more, in his Salon de 1846, to illustrate the notion of the spurious illusion or what Baudelaire terms "le poncif":

> Quand un chanteur met la main sur le coeur, cela veut dire d'ordinaire: je l'aimerai toujours. Serre-t-il les poings en regardant le souffleur ou les planches, cela signifie: il mourra le traître! --Voilà le poncif.
> (P., 925-926)

In "Le Vin des chiffonniers," Baudelaire again denounces the illusory nature of art in his caricature of the poet-as-chiffonnier. The poet is portrayed in the rôle of the ragpicker for he, like his none-too-illustrious counterpart, attempts to collect and revitalize the débris of the metropolis ("On voit un chiffonnier qui vient, hochant la tête,/Butant, et se cognant aux murs comme un poëte," P., 101). The poet is, to use Banville's characterization of Baudelaire, the "chiffonnier alchimiste."[36] Not only does the poet resemble the chiffonnier concerning his selection of subject matter, but, in the drunken rêverie of this ignoble specimen of humanity, we find both an ironic self-portrait of the artist-as-pariah as well as a bitter parody of the artist's method of composition. The delusion of grandeur entertained by the inebriated ragpicker thus comes to symbolize the poetic-experience-as-illusion ("glorieux projets," P., 101)[37] which offers but a brief respite from the miseries of the real world. Art is a drunken pantomime, an "étourdissante et lumineuse orgie" (ibid.),[38] the artist a tottering clown.

What constitutes art is precisely its unreality, which is a function of its contrapuntal relationship with reality. Art, like the theatre, cannot imitate reality ("Qui oserait assigner à l'art la fonction stérile d'imiter la nature?," Le Peintre de la vie moderne, P., 1185): art must offer a heightened perception of reality:

> Mes opinions sur le théâtre. . . . Je voudrais que les comédiens fussent montés sur des patins très-hauts, portassent des masques plus expressifs que le visage humain et parlassent à travers des porte-voix. (P., 1276)

The fascination of the theatre is not without its applications to the real world; its fascination lies in the seduction of the fantastic, which, whilst remaining apart from life, offers the possibility, by way of example, of ameliorating life through the realization of its aesthetic potentialities:

> "Hier on m'a mené au théâtre. Dans des palais grands et tristes, au fond desquels on voit la mer et le ciel, des hommes et des femmes, sérieux et tristes aussi, mais bien plus beaux et bien mieux habillés que ceux que nous voyons partout, parlent avec une voix chantante. Ils se menacent, ils supplient, ils se désolent, et ils appuient souvent leur main sur un poignard enfoncé dans leur ceinture. Ah! c'est bien beau! Les femmes sont bien plus belles et bien plus grandes que celles qui viennent nous voir à la maison, et, quoique avec leurs grands yeux creux et leurs joues enflammées elles aient l'air terrible, on ne peut pas s'empêcher de les aimer. On a peur, on a envie de pleurer, et cependant l'on est content... Et puis, ce qui est plus singulier, cela donne envie d'être habillé de même, de dire et de faire les mêmes choses, et de parler avec la même voix..." ("Les Vocations," P., 281-282)

Art, for Baudelaire, must approximate the enraptured transport afforded by the "paradis artificiels." In Le Poëme du haschisch, Baudelaire characterizes the magic world of intoxicants as "un théâtre de prestidigitation et d'escamotage, où tout est merveilleux et imprévu" (P., 354). Art, too, must be an apotheosis. "Tout poëte lyrique," writes Baudelaire in his monograph on Banville, "en vertu de sa nature, opère fatalement un retour vers l'Eden perdu. Tout, hommes, paysages, palais, dans le monde lyrique, est pour ainsi dire apothéosé" (P., 737). It is important here to comprehend the theatrical implication of the term "apothéosé." Apart from its etymological significance (i.e., achieving a god-like status), Littré notes the following: "au théâtre, dans les féeries, décor final où plusieurs personnages sont représentés dans une sorte de gloire céleste."[39]

The concluding verses of "L'Irréparable," published in La Revue des Deux Mondes of 1 June 1855, illustrate what may be termed an abortive attempt at apotheosis:

> --J'ai vu parfois, au fond d'un théâtre banal
> Qu'enflammait l'orchestre sonore,
> Une fée allumer dans un ciel infernal
> Une miraculeuse aurore;
> J'ai vu parfois au fond d'un théâtre banal
> Un être, qui n'était que lumière, or et gaze,
> Terrasser l'énorme Satan;
> Mais mon coeur, que jamais ne visite l'extase,
> Est un théâtre où l'on attend
> Toujours, toujours en vain, l'être aux ailes de gaze!
> (P., 53)

The miracle of art has not been achieved: all that remains is an infinite but utopian desire that the theatre of art emulate the apotheosis of the banal theatre. It is important to note that this piece was inspired by Marie Daubrun and her participation in the pantomime La Belle aux cheveux d'or at the Porte-Saint-Martin. Although Adam[40] insists that the poem was inspired by this specific pantomime, I would suggest, on the contrary, that it is the spirit of Pantomime itself which is invoked in these verses. Baudelaire's fascination with pantomime, which is evident in the luminous pages on this theme in De l'essence du rire, as well as in his attraction towards the pantomimes-arlequinades-féeriques produced at the Funambules, were certainly instrumental in the formulation of his aesthetics. The fairy-like spell of the pantomime was likewise, for Baudelaire, a central aspect of the marionette; hence his enthusiasm to write a play for Duranty's[41] marionette-theatre (Corr., II, 40), and his use of the marionette metaphor to characterize the extravagant, explosive qualities of Cruickshank's caricatures ("Tous ces petits personnages miment avec fureur et turbulence comme des acteurs de pantomime," P., 1016). Pantomime is, after all, a constituent element of "la bouffonnerie lyrique" (P., 1261). The "souffle merveilleux" (P., 990) of pantomime is, indeed, to be simulated by the writer in his efforts to conjure up the magic spectacle of art ("Comment la plume pourrait-elle rivaliser avec la pantomime?," De l'essence du rire, P., 990).

The enchantment of the theatre does not leave the spectator spellbound; rather, the "merveilleux" of the theatre is defined by the delineation of its boundaries, by its contiguity with reality. Baudelaire's attempt to define "la frontière du merveilleux" (P., 991) is, of necessity, utopian; he can merely affirm the opposition between the real and the fantastic, as we witness, for example, in his description of the hashish-taker ensconced in the dark auditorium, his gaze fixed on the "scène lumineuse" (P., 364) as he attempts to delineate "la ligne de séparation du faux front d'avec le véritable" (ibid.). The chiaroscural interplay between reality and fantasy is clearly brought out in Baudelaire's description of the "éclaboussures de la rampe" (Le Peintre de la vie moderne, P., 1174) in an aquarelle by Guys, the hyperbolic universe of the theatre vying with the splendour and brilliance of the imperial court, which, by contrast, is an "abîme de lumière" (ibid.):

> Une surtout de ces aquarelles m'a ébloui par son caractère magique. Sur le bord d'une loge d'une richesse lourde et princière, l'Impératrice apparaît dans une attitude tranquille et reposée; l'Empereur se penche légèrement comme pour mieux voir le théâtre; au-dessous, deux cent-gardes, debout, dans une immobilité militaire et presque hiératique, reçoivent sur leur brillant uniforme les éclaboussures de

> la rampe. Derrière la bande de feu, dans l'atmosphère idéale de la scène, les comédiens chantent, déclament, gesticulent harmonieusement; de l'autre côté s'étend un abîme de lumière vague, un espace circulaire encombré de figures humaines à tous les étages: c'est le lustre et le public.
> (ibid.)

This diptych structure parallels the "diptyque obsédant,"[42] of the *Petits Poèmes en prose*. It serves to underline the essential ephemerality of the theatrical illusion; its luminosity, like a firework, is but of short duration:

> Le Plaisir vaporeux fuira vers l'horizon
> Ainsi qu'une sylphide au fond de la coulisse.
> ("L'Horloge," P., 76)

Baudelaire's luminous concept of the theatre is crystallized in the symbol of the "lustre," which, for him, captures the magic and artificial splendour of the theatrical spectacle:

> Ce que j'ai toujours trouvé de plus beau dans un théâtre, dans mon enfance et encore maintenant, c'est le *lustre*--un bel object, lumineux, crystallin, compliqué, circulaire et symétrique. . . . Après tout, le lustre m'a toujours paru l'acteur principal, vu à travers le gros bout ou le petit bout de la lorgnette. (P., 1275-1276)

It is in this light that we must understand Baudelaire's pronouncements concerning the need for a magical theatre ("Ne pas oublier dans le drame le côté merveilleux, la sorcellerie et le romanesque," *Fusées*, P., 1253), aspects of which he perceived in the pantomimes and popular theatre of his day. For the contemporary theatre of the period, the moralising platitudes of those dramatists such as Augier and Ponsard, with their "théâtre pseudo-odéonien,"[43] he had nothing but contempt (". . . la France abêtie ne connaissait que deux auteurs, Ponsard et Alexandre Dumas fils, *les poëtes favoris du nouvel Empire*," *Richard Wagner et* Tannhäuser *à Paris*, P., 1243), as is quite evident from his pamphlet Les Drames et les romans honnêtes, directed against the "chevaliers du bon sens" (P., 617): "Depuis quelque temps, une grande fureur d'honnêteté s'est emparée du théâtre et aussi du roman" (ibid.).[44] For the classical theatre,[45] too, Baudelaire had but faint praise: he could not accept the factitious nature of the genre, with its over-simplification on the psychological and moral levels. Baudelaire did, however, appreciate Balzac and Diderot[46] (". . . je parlerai des tentatives qu'ont faites pour rajeunir le théâtre deux grands esprits français, Balzac et Diderot," Les Drames et les romans honnêtes, P., 622). The project remained unrealized. "Dans l'ensemble," writes Descotes, "le théâtre français paraît à Baudelaire trop étriqué, trop mesuré pour jouer en quelque façon le rôle d'excitant artificiel que remplit, lui, le théâtre de Shakespeare."[47]

Although Baudelaire found little enthusiasm for contemporary theatre, he did nonetheless admire greatly the actor Rouvière, to whom he dedicated two articles: firstly, the "notice" for La Nouvelle Galerie des artistes contemporains of 1855, and secondly, the "notice nécrologique" in La Petite Revue of 28 October 1865. For Baudelaire, Rouvière, with his Romantic "fougue," was the embodiment of the fantastic and the magical which, for him, were the sine qua non of the theatre. Another Romantic actor capable of stimulating a similar exaltation in the spectator, and whom, for this reason, Baudelaire admired, was Frédérick Lemaître (". . . des tempêtes théâtrales . . . des hommes tels que Frédérick et Rouvière," Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris, P., 1240). The ardour of their style is a type of "ivresse," as Baudelaire makes quite explicit in his comparison of the artificial paradises with "des scènes analogues à la Kean et à la Frédérick" (*Du Vin et du haschisch*, P., 331). Rouvière's turbulent style, which resembled that of Kean and Lekain ("Il a des pétulences terribles, des aspirations lancées à toute volée, des ardeurs concentrées qui font rêver à tout ce qu'on raconte de Kean et Lekain," *Philibert Rouvière*, P., 547), is typical of the Romantic high-flown manner, which Baudelaire discerns also in Delacroix's Romantic paintings ("En fait de gestes sublimes, Delacroix n'a de rivaux qu'en dehors de son art. Je ne connais guère que Frédérick Lemaître et Macready," *Salon de 1846*, P., 899).

The magical theatre of which Baudelaire dreamt was never realized. His correspondence is scattered with references to the theatre--even if it be simply the jottings of titles--and he affirms, on many occasions, his specific intention to write for the theatre. For the most part, however, his references to the theatre are interspersed with mentions of financial considerations. His approach to the theatre is not aesthetic, but decidedly alimentary. Commenting on Auguste Vacquerie's successful drama *Les Funérailles de l'honneur*, Baudelaire writes, in a letter to his mother of 21 May 1861: "Un de mes amis vient d'avoir un grand succès au théâtre. J'ai assisté à une scène de créancier pleine d'enseignements" (*Corr.*, II, 165). His letter to his mother of 4 October 1855 is even more explicit: "Les dettes, c'est le théâtre qui les paiera" (*Corr.*, I, 324). The theatre was, for him, a literary merchandise: attempting to complete his drama *Le Marquis du premier houzard*, he feels he must persevere, not on account of any intellectual satisfaction, but rather because it might be financially rewarding (". . . je considère qu'au bout d'un travail de ce genre, il y a peut-être 50,000 francs," Corr., II, 97-98). Baudelaire's attitude towards the theatre is most emphatically summed up in "La Muse vénale." It is not surprising, therefore, that he should deplore the theatre; in a letter to his mother of 3 November 1860, he laments: "le théâtre m'inspire un tel dédain" (Corr., II. 102). In his frantic desire to make his fortune through the theatre, Baudelaire envisaged exploiting the successful theatrical modes of his epoch which he thoroughly despised: historical pieces in the grand manner (Le Marquis du premier houzard) or vaudeville comedies with sensational titles (Le Club des cocus; La Femme entretenue sans le savoir; L'Histoire des brigands).

Four theatrical projects, whilst remaining far from complete, were developed by Baudelaire. The earliest, dating from 1843, was written in conjunction with Ernest Prarond; it is a drama written in alexandrines, entitled Ideolus. The other three projects are scenarios. La Fin de Don Juan, although still in the embryonic stages, testifies to certain fundamental Baudelairian preoccupations in its opposition between the vulgar positivist spirit, Leporello, and the splenetic, morose Don Juan. The scenario entitled Le Marquis du premier houzard is somewhat more detailed. It depicts the psychological conflict of a young émigré, torn between his enthusiasm for the Emperor and his loyalist origins. The Napoleonic myth was a commonplace in the French theatre since the July Monarchy, and, indeed, Baudelaire's choice of subject was not original, being borrowed from a nouvelle by Paul de Gaschon entitled Les Souffrances d'un houzard and published in 1853. Naturally, Baudelaire had recourse to the traditional resources of historical drama. However, his attempts at creating the grand spectacle associated with this genre were nothing less than pathetic. He was totally oblivious to any form of stagecraft; "Les décors," he writes in a letter to Hostein, "vous les devinerez."[48]

L'Ivrogne, the outline of which may be found in a letter addressed to the actor Tisserant of 28 January 1854, is the most detailed of all the scenarios. It is a popular drama, or what Baudelaire himself styles a "mélodrame psychologique" (Letter to Paul de Saint-Victor, 22 October 1854). It is the dramatic counterpart of the early poem "Le Vin de l'assassin," and develops certain ideas on the compensatory nature of artificial stimulants for the "débris" of humanity--a theme Baudelaire had already noted in his essay Du vin et du hachish ("Contemplons un de ces êtres mystérieux, vivant pour ainsi dire des déjections des grandes villes. . . . Il y a sur la boule terrestre une foule innombrable, innomée, dont le sommeil n'endormirait pas suffisamment les souffrances. Le vin compose pour eux des chants et des poëmes," P., 327-328). The drama narrates in great detail a "crime passionnel" (". . . le développement d'un vice, et des résultats successifs d'une situation," Letter to Tisserant, Corr., I, 259). Attention to psychological detail detracts from any development of the scene itself, which is presented as a succession of static tableaux which are only briefly outlined ("maisons de débauche et de ribote"; "paysage nocturne solitaire," ibid., pp. 260-261). Baudelaire does, however, give some consideration to the dramatic possibilities of the empty stage, but this is not developed in any way ("la scène peut ainsi rester vide une ou deux fois--ce qui, à ce qu'on dit, est contre les règles; mais je m'en fiche, --je crois que cette scène vide, ce paysage nocturne solitaire peuvent augmenter le lugubre de l'effet," ibid., p. 260). It would seem that Baudelaire took this scenario more seriously than his other attempts in this field: he even felt that this work would be his testing ground as a dramatic author ("Dans peu de temps je saurai si je suis capable d'une bonne conception dramatique," ibid., p. 256). Despite this, the fact remains that Baudelaire's theatre is decidedly untheatrical. "La théâtralité de Baudelaire," writes Barthes, "fuit son théâtre pour s'étendre dans le reste de son oeuvre."[49]

Although Baudelaire's theatre is characterized by its devastating untheatricality, a theatrical mode of thought may be discerned throughout his works. This is particularly true of his art criticism, which abounds in references to the theatre (see Appendix D), whether it be concerning the particular style of the painter--as for example the parallel he draws between the Romantic "fougue" of Delacroix's style and the spirited form of acting of Frédérick Lemaître or Philibert Rouvière[50]--or the technique of the art critic, as, for example, in his emphatic praise of Alexandre Dumas' impassioned and vigorous appreciation of the Salon de 1859 ("Tout cela, sans doute, était écrit avec ce lâché dramatique dont il a pris l'habitude en causant avec son innombrable auditoire," Salon de 1859, P., 1039-1040), or the analysis of pictorial composition, for example in his vitriolic criticism of Horace Vernet's La Prise de la Smalah d'Abd-el-Kader à

Taguin ("L'unité, nulle; mais une foule de petites anecdotes intéressantes--un vaste panorama de cabaret; --en général, ces sortes de décorations sont divisées en manière de compartiments ou d'actes, par un arbre, une grande montagne, une caverne, etc.," Salon de 1845, P., 819). The artist, as Baudelaire describes him in his Salon de 1859 is, in fact, a "metteur en scène" (P., 1091), artfully assembling "scènes" and "personnages" (P., 1090-1091) in the creation of his pictorial illusion ("Regardez ces deux petits mondes dramatiques inventés par M. Buté," P., 1090).

Pictorial art, for Baudelaire, is, undoubtedly, to be equated with the theatre. "M. Alfred Dedreux," writes Baudelaire in his Salon de 1846, "a cela pour lui qu'il sait peindre et que ses peintures ont l'aspect vif et frais des décorations de théâtre" (P., 928-929). "M. Horace Vernet," he continues, ". . . est un homme d'une humeur heureuse et folâtre, qui habite un pays artificiel dont les acteurs et les coulisses sont faits du même carton; mais il règne en maître dans son royaume de parade et de divertissements" (P., 929). We recognize here the Romantic ironist in the guise of the painter, who likewise indulges in his own form of aesthetic jonglerie. In his Salon de 1859, Baudelaire is quite explicit that for him the term dramatic signifies what is emphatic, what is surreal: realistic theatre, like naturalistic art, is anathema. Art is to be equated with artistry; hence the necessary distortion of reality (". . . la première affaire d'un artiste est de substituer l'homme à la nature et de protester contre elle," Salon de 1846, P., 930). Describing a work by the English painter Leighton entitled: Le Comte Pâris se rend *à la maison des Capulets pour chercher sa fiancée Juliette, et la trouve inanimée*, Baudelaire notes the following:

> Peinture riche et minutieuse, avec des tons violents et un fini précieux, ouvrage plein d'opiniâtreté, mais dramatique, emphatique même; car nos amis d'outre-Manche ne représentent pas les sujets tirés du théâtre comme des scènes *vraies*, mais comme des scènes *jouées* avec l'exagération nécessaire, et ce défaut, si c'en est un, prête à ces ouvrages je ne sais quelle beauté étrange et paradoxale. (P., 1070)

The *locus classicus* of the illusion-producing arts is, of course, the opera, which metaphor Baudelaire frequently uses to convey the essential fantasia of art; hence the parallel he draws between the *rêveries* of artists such as Rembrandt, Rubens and Watteau, and the magic spectacle of opera:

> Quant au paysage de fantaisie, qui est l'expression de la rêverie humaine, l'égoïsme humain substitué à la nature, il fut peu cultivé. Ce genre singulier, dont Rembrandt, Rubens, Watteau, et quelques livres d'étrennes anglais offrent les meilleurs exemples, et qui est en petit l'analogue des belles décorations de l'Opéra, représente le besoin naturel du merveilleux. (*Salon de 1846*; P., 936)

Similarly, the metaphor of opera is used to convey the process of stylisation and idealisation inherent in aesthetic creation. Baudelaire characterizes thus the works of Achille Devéria, in his *Salon de 1845*:

> Toutes ses femmes coquettes et doucement sensuelles étaient les idéalisations de celles que l'on avait vues et désirées le soir dans les concerts, aux Bouffes, à l'Opéra ou dans les grands salons. (P., 826-827)

The aesthetic spectacle is not only the property of the stage, but also of life. One is reminded here of the first episode of "Les Vocations," with its theatricalisation of life. The opera, in its unreality, finds its contrapuntal existence in its opposition to the world of reality. In his Salon de 1859, Baudelaire characterizes thus the "composition dramatique" (P., 1062) of M. Baron, which acts upon him like an artificial stimulant:

> Il compose admirablement, groupe avec esprit, colore avec ardeur, et jette une flamme amusante dans tous ses drames; drames, car il a la composition dramatique et quelque chose qui ressemble au génie de l'opéra. Si j'oubliais de le remercier, je serais bien ingrat; je lui dois une sensation délicieuse. Quand, au sortir d'un taudis, sale et mal éclairé, un homme se trouve tout d'un coup transporté dans un appartement propre, orné de meubles ingénieux et revêtu de couleurs caressantes, il sent son esprit s'illuminer et ses fibres s'apprêter aux choses du bonheur. Tel le plaisir physique que m'a causé l'Hôtellerie de Saint-Luc. Je venais de considérer avec tristesse tout un chaos, plâtreux et terreux, d'horreur et de vulgarité, et, quand je m'approchai de cette riche et lumineuse peinture, je sentis mes entrailles crier: Enfin, nous voici dans la belle société!
> (P., 1062-1063)

Although the operatic metaphor has, generally speaking, positive connotations, the metaphor does, on occasion, appear in a negative light. We thus find reference to the meretricious nature of the spectacle; the works of Glaize are characterized in the following manner in the Salon de 1845: "Tableaux qui visent à la couleur et malheureusement n'arrivent qu'au coloriage de cafés, ou tout au plus de l'opéra, et dont l'un a été imprudemment placé auprès du Marc-Aurèle de Delacroix" (P., 830-831). Baudelaire's critique of the painter Gleyre in the same work is even more scathing; the operatic metaphor is used here to convey the cheap ostentation of Gleyre's overly sentimental approach: "Il avait volé le coeur du public sentimental avec le tableau du Soir. --Tant qu'il ne s'agissait que de peindre des femmes solfiant de la musique romantique dans un bateau, ça allait; --de même qu'un pauvre opéra triomphe de sa musique à l'aide des objets décolletés ou plutôt déculottés et agréables à voir. . ." (P., 833).

One might almost say that Baudelaire has a theatrical perception of the arts as a modified form of "correspondances." Explaining the distinction between the visionary and the vision, that is to say, the imaginative synthesis made by an artist like Guys, as contrasted with the realist painter's minute attention to detail, Baudelaire finds the analogy for his discussion in the dissimilarity between the genius of Frédérick Lemaître and the uninspiring academic performance of the actor Bouffé:

> Il s'établit alors un duel entre la volonté de tout voir, de ne rien oublier, et la faculté de la mémoire qui a pris l'habitude d'absorber vivement la couleur générale et la silhouette, l'arabesque du contour. Un artiste ayant le sentiment parfait de la forme, mais accoutumé à exercer surtout sa mémoire et son imagination, se trouve alors comme assailli par une émeute de détails, qui tous demandent justice avec la furie d'une foule amoureuse d'égalité absolue. Toute justice se trouve forcément violée; toute harmonie détruite, sacrifiée; mainte trivialité devient énorme; mainte petitesse, usurpatrice. Plus l'artiste se penche avec impartialité vers le détail, plus l'anarchie augmente. Qu'il soit myope ou presbyte, toute hiérarchie et toute subordination disparaissent. C'est un accident qui se présente souvent dans les oeuvres d'un de nos peintres les plus en vogue, dont les défauts d'ailleurs sont si bien appropriés aux défauts de la foule, qu'ils ont singulièrement servi sa popularité. La même analogie se fait deviner dans la pratique de l'art du comédien, art si mystérieux, si profond, tombé aujourd'hui dans la confusion des décadences. M. Frédérick Lemaître compose un rôle avec l'ampleur et la largeur du génie. Si étoilé que soit son jeu de détails lumineux, il reste toujours synthétique et sculptural. M. Bouffé compose les siens avec une minutie de myope et de bureaucrate. (Le Peintre de la vie moderne, P., 1167)

Similarly, Baudelaire compares Vernet's over-attention to minutiae in his battle scenes with a bad drama, where the main plot is submerged in a sea of sub-plots which destroys the unity of the work: "M. Horace Vernet crut une fois, plusieurs fois même, résoudre la difficulté par une série d'épisodes accumulés et juxtaposés. Dès lors, le tableau, privé d'unité, ressemble à ces mauvais drames où une surcharge d'incidents parasites empêche d'apercevoir l'idée mère, la conception génératrice" (Salon de 1859, P., 1059). Indeed, in his appreciation of Rouvière's talent, Baudelaire plainly states the affinities between the actor and the painter: "il se grime, non pas en miniaturiste et en fat, mais en véritable comédien dans lequel il y a toujours un peintre" (Philibert Rouvière, P., 575).

Carrying the analogy one stage further, one could maintain that the actor resembles not only the painter, but also the critic, whose intimate penetration of his subject should transcend the minutiae of the work (". . . la critique doit chercher plutôt à pénétrer intimement le tempérament de chaque artiste et les mobiles qui le font agir qu'à analyser, à raconter chaque oeuvre minutieusement," Exposition universelle de 1855, P., 961). The emotional approach to the work of art, as opposed to the rational, analytical spirit of de-composition, is what Baudelaire significantly terms "le sentiment dramatique" (P., 1047). Describing a work of M. Armand Gautier entitled Hôpital des folles, Baudelaire writes:

> . . . sujet qu'il avait traité, non pas selon la méthode philosophique et germanique . . . qui fait penser aux catégories d'Aristote, mais avec le sentiment dramatique français, uni à une observation fidèle et intelligente. Les amis de l'auteur disent que tout dans l'ouvrage était minutieusement exact: têtes, gestes, physionomies, et copié d'après la nature. Je ne le crois pas, d'abord parce que j'ai surpris dans l'arrangement du tableau des symptômes du contraire, et ensuite parce que ce qui est positivement et universellement exact n'est jamais admirable. (Salon de 1859, P., 1047)

Baudelaire's anti-rational approach to the art of criticism is, here, irritatingly excessive. The dramatic modus operandi of the critic is reflected also in the incisiveness of his thought and style:

> Il ne vous paraîtra donc pas surprenant . . . que Delacroix eût une sympathie très-prononcée pour les écrivains concis et concentrés, ceux dont la prose peu chargée d'ornements a l'air d'imiter les mouvements rapides de la pensée, et dont la phrase ressemble à un geste, Montesquieu, par exemple. Je puis vous fournir un curieux exemple de cette brièveté féconde et poétique. Vous avez comme moi, sans doute lu ces jours derniers, dans la Presse, une très-curieuse et très-belle étude de M. Paul de Saint-Victor sur le plafond de la galerie d'Apollon. Les diverses conceptions du déluge, la manière dont les légendes relatives au déluge doivent être interprétées, le sens moral des épisodes et des actions qui composent l'ensemble de ce merveilleux tableau, rien n'est oublié; et le tableau lui-même est minutieusement décrit avec ce style charmant, aussi spirituel que coloré, dont l'auteur nous a montré tant d'exemples. Cependant le tout ne laissera dans la mémoire qu'un spectre diffus, quelque chose comme la très-vague lumière d'une amplification. Comparez ce vaste morceau aux quelques lignes suivantes, bien plus énergiques, selon moi, et bien plus aptes à faire tableau... (L'Oeuvre et la vie d'Eugène Delacroix, P., 1127)

Applying the law of "correspondances," Baudelaire interprets criticism as a pictorial gesture.

The synthetic power of the imagination, with its capacity for extracting quintessences, is not to be confused with simplification. Again, Baudelaire resorts to the metaphor of the theatre to explain this notion: the gross over-simplification of tragedy with its sterile, rarefied atmosphere, epitomized in the rigid barbarity of the straight line, is to be rejected in favour of the dynamic arabesques of the Romantic imagination:

> Du dessin de Delacroix, si absurdement, si niaisement critiqué, que faut-il dire, si ce n'est qu'il est des vérités élémentaires complètement méconnues; qu'un bon dessin n'est pas une ligne dure, cruelle, despotique, immobile, enfermant

> une figure comme une camisole de force; que le dessin doit être comme la nature, vivant et agité; que la simplification dans le dessin est une monstruosité, comme la tragédie dans le monde dramatique; que la nature nous présente une série infinie de lignes courbes, fuyantes, brisées, suivant une loi de génération impeccable, où le parallélisme est toujours indécis et sinueux, où les concavités et les convexités se correspondent et se poursuivent; que M. Delacroix satisfait admirablement à toutes ces conditions et que, quand même son dessin laisserait percer quelquefois des défaillances ou des outrances, il a au moins cet immense mérite d'être une protestation perpétuelle et efficace contre la barbare invasion de la ligne droite, cette ligne tragique et systématique, dont actuellement les ravages sont déjà immenses dans la peinture et dans la sculpture? (_Exposition universelle de 1855_, P., 973).

Similarly, Baudelaire uses the concept of melodrama as a vehicle to convey the birth of Romantic sensitivity in classical painting; this is illustrated in such artists as Guérin and Girodet, both epigones of the great David. The "ampleur tragique" (_Salon de 1859_, P., 1051) of the classical drama reappears in the exaggerated style of the melodrama, and is infused with a new urbane intimacy:

> Quant à Guérin et Girodet, il ne serait pas difficile de découvrir en eux, d'ailleurs très-préoccupés, comme le prophète, de l'esprit de mélodrame, quelques légers grains corrupteurs, quelques sinistres et amusants symptômes du futur Romantisme. Ne vous semble-t-il pas que cette _Didon_, avec sa toilette si précieuse et si théâtrale, langoureusement étalée au soleil couchant, comme une créole aux nerfs détendus, a plus de parenté avec les premières visions de Chateaubriand qu'avec les conceptions de Virgile, et que son oeil humide, noyé dans les vapeurs du keepsake, annonce presque certaines Parisiennes de Balzac? (_Exposition universelle de 1855_, P., 962).

And so too with the vaudeville. Knowing Baudelaire's lack of esteem for the vaudeville productions of his day, we can better understand his use of the vaudeville metaphor to convey his contempt for the sculptors of the period with their abominable proclivity towards kitsch:

> Du reste, il ne faut pas croire que ces gens-là manquent de science. Ils sont érudits comme des vaudevillistes et des académiciens; ils mettent à contribution toutes les époques et tous les genres; ils ont approfondi toutes les écoles. Ils transformeraient volontiers les tombeaux de Saint-Denis en boîtes à cigares ou à cachemires, et tous les bronzes florentins en pièces de deux sous. (Salon de 1846, P., 945)

As Barthes[51] has stated, the interest of Baudelaire's "théâtralité" lies not so much in what remains of his dramatic plans, as in its existence elsewhere. Barthes does not, however, develop this insight, and, like Maurice Descotes[52] in a later study, only discusses the poet's dramatic plans and comments in general terms on Baudelaire's attraction to the theatre and the significance of his failure to realize his dramatic ambitions. In point of fact, the dramatic quality of Baudelaire's poetic universe has rarely been examined, although there are certain studies of Baudelaire's use of the dramatic persona, such as Mossop's[53] now classic analysis, after the fashion of Wimsatt and Beardsley, of the peripeteia of the Poet-Hero, or Freedman's comparable contribution entitled: "Poet and Mask: The Drama of Les Fleurs du mal."[54] King's[55] all-too-brief study of dialogue in Baudelaire's poetic universe, whilst illuminating, is, nonetheless, somewhat limited in scope.

Baudelaire's use of dialogue in Les Fleurs du mal is perhaps one of the major indicators of the poet's "théâtralité," discernible particularly in his late poetry. There is a progression, as King explains, from the poem-painting in Baudelaire's early works (i.e., pre-1857), to the poem-drama of the later works. The early emphasis on static description is later substituted by a more dramatic awareness. In the early poetry, dialogue is an infrequent feature, usually taking the form of relatively long speeches, characterized by their marked use of rhetoric, as for example in "L'Ame du vin" or "Bénédiction." Indeed, one cannot fail to notice Baudelaire's fondness for exclamation marks and for the fitting "hélas!" which intrudes into so many of his lines, whether in his early or his later works. One might consider, at this point, the numerous anecdotes concerning Baudelaire's delight in rhetoric "pour épater le bourgeois," and the following lines addressed to Poulet-Malassis four months before the appearance of Les Fleurs du mal: "Quant à ma ponctuation, rappelez-vous qu'elle sert à noter non seulement le sens, mais LA DECLAMATION" (Corr., I, 384).

In Baudelaire's later works, there is a shift from exclamatory address to conversational dialogue, from literary language to a spoken, more familiar language in which the portions of dialogue are considerably shorter, as, for example, in "Le Rêve d'un curieux" ("Et de toi fais-tu dire: 'Oh! l'homme singulier!,'" P., 121) or "Le Voyage" ("Criant à Dieu, dans sa furibonde agonie:/'O mon semblable, ô mon maître, je te maudis!,'" P., 125). The increasing familiarity and colloquialness of the later poems ("'D'où vous vient, disiez-vous, cette tristesse étrange,'" "Semper Eadem," P., 39; "Ils me disent, tes yeux, clairs comme le cristal:/'Pour toi, bizarre amant, quel est donc ton mérite?,'" "Sonnet d'automne," P., 62) would appear somewhat of a paradox in the light of Baudelaire's decidedly anti-realist aesthetic views. This tendency towards the prose form reveals in some measure Baudelaire's increasing interest in the prose poem.

Baudelaire's dramatic use of dialogue in Les Fleurs du mal is manifest in his creation of the "saynète" as a vehicle for the presentation of universal problems. "Le Voyage," for example, is a dramatic debate on the journey of life, where conflicting points of view are voiced through the different speakers. The first speaker puts forward a point of view which is usually elaborated upon by a second "voice" and attacked by a speaker of the opposition. Man's aspirations, symbolized in the tales of the adventurous voyageur, are punctuated by the stay-at-home's sarcastic jibes ("Et puis, et puis encore?," P., 125), the debate concluding with a bitter indictment of the futility and vulgarity of civilization, commented on by a second traveller ("--Tel est du globe entier l'éternel bulletin," P., 126). Even when the dialogue turns to narrative, the latter adopts a dramatic form: man's insatiable desire for escape is thus presented in the voice of the fairground charlatan touting his custom ("Entendez-vous ces voix, charmantes et funèbres,/ Qui chantent: 'Par ici! vous qui voulez manger/Le Lotus parfumé!,'" ibid.), or man's quest for peace through human understanding represented in the call to his Electra ("'Pour rafraîchir ton coeur nage vers ton Electre!'/ Dit celle dont jadis nous baisions les genoux," ibid.). The poem concludes with the poet's dramatic address to Death: the silent interlocutor carries profound metaphysical significance.

"Un Voyage à Cythère," published in La Revue des Deux Mondes of 1 June 1855, offers a similar dramatic debate, the subject of which is an imaginary voyage to Cythera, which turns out to be not the sexual Eldorado of legend, but a place of punishment and expiation for the sins of the flesh. With Baudelaire, the spatial trajectory is to be equated with the psychological, as was the case in "Le Voyage"; this would be confirmed, here, by the word "coeur" in the opening and closing lines of the poem, which, in this respect, resembles the circular tour we observed in "A une Madone." The dramatic form is condensed in the two narrative voices, whereby an ironic contrast is established between the lyrical, though highly stylized, evocation of the Cythera of legend and its drab and deceptive reality ("Eldorado banal," P., 111). The voice of the idealist in the debate is supported by a third speaker who echoes the lyrical note sounded in the opening verse. Somewhat as in "Le Voyage," the poem concludes with the victory of the disillusioned parties, the debate turning into something of a moral essay in allegorical form ("Le coeur enseveli dans cette allégorie," P., 113), as the poet reflects on the spectacle of human folly in the shape of carnal lust.

The theme of "Femmes damnées: Delphine et Hippolyte," published in Le Parnasse Satyrique du Dix-neuvième Siècle of 1864, is likewise a moral debate, whose subject is homosexuality. As opposed to the more animated dialogue of the two previous poems, we have here a more extended form of dialogue, which allows for a more developed sense of characterization. The miniature drama is presided over by the voice of the poet, whose intervention in the concluding stanzas of the poem reaffirms the sense of moral ostracism experienced by the two protagonists. The grand manner of the classical tragedy, with its over-emphatic theatricality, intensifies the moral debate:

Delphine secouant sa crinière tragique,
Et comme trépignant sur le trépied de fer,
L'oeil fatal, répondit d'une voix despotique:
--"Qui donc devant l'amour ose parler d'enfer?"
(P., 138)

Even the characters in the drama display a marked awareness of the drama which they are enacting on the stage of life: their sense of social ostracism is thus expressed in the line: "Que nos rideaux fermés nous séparent du monde" (P., 139).

"Le Masque" illustrates the way in which Baudelaire utilizes the dramatic debate not only as a vehicle for exploring metaphysical questions, but primarily as a means to convey his aesthetic argument. This is achieved through the animated dialogue between the two art connoisseurs, where we almost catch the very accent of the speaking voice. As in the previous poem, the conclusion is a sombre one: the complacent dilettantism of the two art-lovers gives way to problems of a more human nature, as the poet reflects on the moment of suffering captured in the sculpture and ponders on its metaphysical significance.

The use of dramatic debate for the exposition of aesthetic arguments is not limited to Baudelaire's poetic universe. In _L'Ecole païenne_, published in _La Semaine Théâtrale_ of 22 January 1852, we witness Baudelaire at his most utilitarian in his savage diatribe against autotelic art as represented by the neo-paganist school. The argument is developed in the two narrative voices: that of the poet speaking on the death of Pan, and that of his opponent vigorously affirming his belief in the cult, which has been overshadowed by antiseptic christianity ("Il faut revenir aux vraies doctrines, obscurcies un instant par l'infâme Galiléen," P., 623). The work opens with the following dialogue:

> Dans un banquet commémoratif de la révolution de Février, un toast a été porté au dieu Pan, oui, au dieu Pan, par un de ces jeunes gens qu'on peut qualifier d'instruits et d'intelligents.
>
> --Mais, lui disais-je, qu'est-ce que le dieu Pan a de commun avec la révolution?
>
> --Comment donc? répondait-il; mais c'est le dieu Pan qui fait la révolution. Il est la révolution.
>
> --D'ailleurs, n'est-il pas mort depuis longtemps? Je croyais qu'on avait entendu planer une grande voix au-dessus de la Méditerranée, et que cette voix mystérieuse, qui roulait depuis les colonnes d'Hercule jusqu'aux rivages asiatiques, avait dit au vieux monde: LE DIEU PAN EST MORT!
>
> --C'est un bruit qu'on fait courir. Ce sont de mauvaises langues; mais il n'en est rien. Non, le dieu Pan n'est pas mort! le dieu Pan vit encore, reprit-il en levant les yeux au ciel avec un attendrissement fort bizarre... Il va revenir.
>
> Il parlait du dieu Pan comme du prisonnier de Sainte-Hélène.
>
> --Eh quoi, lui dis-je, seriez-vous donc païen?
>
> --Mais oui, sans doute; ignorez-vous donc que le Paganisme bien compris, bien entendu, peut seul sauver le monde? (P., 623)

Dialogue in the Baudelairian poetic universe is not always interpersonal, but can take the form of dialogue between the poet and some inanimate object, as, for example, in "L'Imprévu" ("L'horloge, à son tour, dit à voix basse: 'Il est mur,/Le damné!...,'" P., 154), "Sonnet d'automne" ("Ils me disent, tes yeux. . .," P., 62) or "Remords posthume" ("Le tombeau te dira. . .," P., 33). Such dialogue between animate and inanimate not only serves to demonstrate the artifice of the fictitious universe, but also to reinforce the poet's communion with the world, or rather with the "corresponding" universe in which he is the principal actor.

Paradoxically, the total absence of dialogue may also be a constituent element of Baudelaire's dramatic universe. A poem like

"A une passante," for example, is profoundly dramatic in its anecdotal narration of the poet's chance encounter, its modernity prefiguring twentieth-century cinematographic techniques. The scene is presented ("La rue . . . hurlait," P., 88), onto which is grafted the event ("Une femme passa," ibid.), the poet's reaction to it ("Moi, je buvais," ibid.) and finally the poet's reflections on its significance in the form of an interior monologue:

> Ailleurs, bien loin d'ici! trop tard! jamais peut-être!
> Car j'ignore où tu fuis, tu ne sais où je vais,
> O toi que j'eusse aimée, ô toi qui le savais!
> (P., 89)

This miniature plot could, in fact, be considered as a scene for a possible drama. The dramatic technique used here might well be compared with the prose poem "La Chambre double," where the stage is elaborately prepared for the singular event and the metaphysical conclusion in the shape of Time anthropomorphized ("'Et hue donc! bourrique! Sue donc, esclave! Vis donc, damné!,'" P., 235). Similarly, one might compare "Les Bijoux," first published in Le Parnasse Satyrique du Dix-neuvième Siècle of 1864 (v. II), where the sexual drama finds expression in the dramatic dance of the austere animal trainer and the waiting jewelled cat.

Dialogue in Les Fleurs du mal holds as much variety as the costume of Harlequin: sometimes the locutor is absent, as in "Correspondances" or "Bohémiens en voyage"; sometimes the dialogue takes the form of a personal interchange between a "je" and a "tu" as in "La Muse malade" or "La Muse vénale"; sometimes the locutor is the actor in the poem of himself, where we witness a histrionic dédoublement of the poet, as, for example, in "Le Jeu," where we observe the poet in the rôle of both actor and spectator in the spectacle:

> Voilà le noir tableau qu'en un rêve nocturne
> Je vis se dérouler sous mon oeil clairvoyant.
> Moi-même, dans un coin de l'antre taciturne,
> Je me vis accoudé, froid, muet, enviant. . . .
> (P., 92)

Sometimes the persona fluctuates from the subjective "je" as sentient being, to the "je" as Poet and finally to the "nous" of humanity, as in "J'aime le souvenir." "Writing," as Elizabeth Sewell so aptly states, "is a way of playing parts, of trying on masks, of assuming rôles. To make any work of art is to make, or rather to unmake and remake oneself."[56] The artist is, in fact, a type of "montreur de marionnettes," both exhibiting and masking his own personal sentiments. If the poet is considered a histrio in his adoption of the persona, he must also be seen as a literary histrio in his adaptation of the style of others ("Il était à la fois tous les artistes qu'il avait étudiés et tous les livres qu'il avait lus," La Fanfarlo, P., 487). Hence Pommier's conclusion concerning the literary borrowings of Baudelaire in the classification of the latter as "un littérateur un peu cabotin."[57]

In one of his projected prefaces for Les Fleurs du mal of 1861, Baudelaire notes the following: "Le Décor. --Ainsi la nouveauté" (P., 184). In L'Art philosophique, dating from 1859, Baudelaire likewise emphasizes the fundamental importance of décor:

> Il faut, dans la traduction des oeuvres d'art philosophique, apporter une grande minutie et une grande attention; là les lieux, le décor, les meubles, les ustensiles (voir Hogarth), tout est allégorie, allusion, hiéroglyphes, rébus.
> (P., 1101)

Décor, then, is an essential part of the poet's histrionic rêverie ("Je préfère contempler quelques décors de théâtre, où je trouve artistement exprimés et tragiquement concentrés mes rêves les plus chers," Salon de 1859, P., 1085). Despite Baudelaire's lack of interest in décor in his theatre ("Je n'indique pas les décors, qui peuvent être d'un effet poétique, vous les devinerez," Le Marquis du premier houzard, P., 590), the awareness of décor in Baudelaire's poetic universe is quite striking. Consider, for example, "Les Bijoux," where the exotic boudoir of his mistress is evoked, inundated with the glow of dying embers (a setting not unlike the heavy sensuality of the Fanfarlo's boudoir, or the decadent mise en scène of "Une Martyre") or "L'Invitation au voyage" with its luxuriant exoticism of quite a different order, or, conversely, those poems, such as "Une Charogne" or "Un Voyage à Cythère," where Baudelaire dwells with macabre relish on images of physical decomposition. "Les Projets," published in Le Présent of 24 August 1857, offers an instructive example not only of Baudelaire's detailed description of the mise en scène, but, more importantly, of his awareness of the décor. The prose poem is a series of vignettes which, after the fashion of "L'Invitation au voyage," create the "analogy" of the beloved. After conjuring up a Watteauesque park, the poet exclaims: "Mais à quoi bon de si beaux décors?" (P., 1610); after evoking a langorous tropical scene, the same realization: "Pourquoi cette vaste mise en scène?" (ibid.).[58] As in "Une Mort héroïque," it is the poet himself who blows the whistle on his own poetry, revealing the abyss at the heart of the illusion. What is symbolized here is the artificial and illusory nature of art: it is an interrogation of the existential drama of the creative act.

That décor should signify illusion, we have but to consult the Salon de 1859, where the "paysages romantiques" are described in terms of décor:

> Je regrette encore, et j'obéis peut-être à mon insu aux accoutumances de ma jeunesse, le paysage romantique, et même le paysage romanesque qui existait déjà au dix-huitième siècle. . . . En parcourant ces amusants albums de voyage [les aquarelles de M. Hildebrandt], il me semble toujours que je revois, que je reconnais ce que je n'ai jamais vu. Grâce à lui, mon imagination fouettée s'est promenée à travers trente-huit paysages romantiques, depuis les remparts sonores de la Scandinavie jusqu'aux pays lumineux des ibis et des cigognes, depuis le Fiord de Séraphitus jusqu'au pic de Ténériffe. La lune et le soleil ont tour à tour illuminé ces décors, l'un versant sa tapageuse lumière, l'autre ses patients enchantements.
> (P., 1084)

Even more conclusive, is Baudelaire's equation of décor with the artificial paradises. Describing the intoxication of "l'homme-dieu," Baudelaire writes:

> Tous les objets environnants sont autant de suggestions qui agitent en lui un monde de pensées, toutes plus colorées, plus vivantes, plus subtiles que jamais, et revêtues d'un vernis magique. "Ces villes magnifiques, se dit-il, où les bâtiments superbes sont échelonnés comme dans les décors..." (Le Poëme du haschisch, P., 382)

Baudelaire's depiction of the maniacal rêveries of the hashish taker is the supreme allegory of the artist-as-illusionist:

> Ce seigneur visible de la nature visible (je parle de l'homme) a donc voulu créer le Paradis par la pharmacie, par les boissons fermentées, semblable à un maniaque qui remplacerait des meubles solides et des jardins véritables par des décors peints sur toile et montés sur châssis.
> (ibid., P., 349)

Indeed, the affinities between the artist and the hasish taker are stated quite specifically by the latter: "On dit que l'enthousiasme des poëtes et des créateurs ressemble à ce que j'ai éprouvé; . . . si le délire poétique ressemble à celui que m'a procuré une petite cuillerée de confiture, je pense que les plaisirs du public coûtent bien cher aux poëtes, et ce n'est pas sans un certain bien-être, une satisfaction prosaïque, que je me suis enfin sentie *chez* moi, dans mon *chez* moi intellectuel, je veux dire dans la vie réelle" (ibid., P., 369-370). Two levels of illusion are contrasted here: the unnatural illusion of the hashish dream, and the natural illusion stimulated by poetic consciousness. Whilst both partake of the realms of the illusory, the latter is, comparatively speaking, nearer the world of reality. Hence the ambiguity in the term "la vie réelle," which does not refer to the world of external reality, but rather to the confines of the mind. To indulge, however, in the world of illusion, the artist must nonetheless possess a firm footing in the real world; that is to say, the consummate skill and artistry of the poet-as-artisan must be brought to bear in the fabrication of the illusion. Analyzing the amalgam of technical expertise and poetic *rêverie* of Gautier's style, Baudelaire writes, in his monograph of 1859:

> Je me rappelle que, très-jeune, quand je goûtai pour la première fois aux oeuvres de notre poëte, la sensation de la touche posée juste, du coup porté droit, me faisait tressaillir, et que l'admiration engendrait en moi une sorte de convulsion nerveuse. Peu à peu je m'accoutumai à la perfection, et je m'abandonnai au mouvement de ce beau style onduleux et brillanté, comme un homme monté sur un cheval sûr qui lui permet la rêverie, ou sur un navire assez solide pour défier les temps non prévus par la boussole, et qui peut contempler à loisir les magnifiques décors sans erreur que construit la nature dans ses heures de génie. (P., 690)

For Baudelaire, décor is a kind of apotheosis. Contrasting the lyrical élan of Banville with the analytical spirit of the romancier, Baudelaire writes in Sur quelques-uns de mes contemporains:

> La lyre fuit volontiers tous les détails dont le roman se régale. L'âme lyrique fait des enjambées vastes comme des synthèses; l'esprit du romancier se délecte dans l'analyse. . . . . Ici, le paysage est revêtu, comme les figures, d'une magie hyperbolique; il devient décor. (P., 736)

The hyperbolic magic of Banville's "décor" may be compared with Watteau's "carnaval" as evoked by Baudelaire in "Les Phares":

> Watteau, ce carnaval où bien des coeurs illustres,
> Comme des papillons, errent en flamboyant,
> Décors frais et légers éclairés par des lustres
> Qui versent la folie à ce bal tournoyant.
> (P., 13)

Watteau's operatic décor, unlike Banville's "décor apothéosé," is not totally divorced from reality: a hint of madness punctures the idyll. The evocation of the magical, faery world would be incomplete without reference to Shakespeare. In L'Esprit et le style de M. Villemain, Baudelaire notes the following: ". . . petite digression forcée sur Shakespeare, qui a jeté le décor dans le drame" (P., 785).

In this context, one might consider the ecstatic rêverie composed of space and light which comprises what one might term the décorless décor which Baudelaire finds as the analogy for the sensory experience afforded by Wagner's music:

> Ensuite je me peignis involontairement l'état délicieux d'un homme en proie à une grande rêverie dans une solitude absolue, mais une solitude avec un immense horizon et une large lumière diffuse; l'immensité sans autre décor qu'elle-même. (Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris, P., 1213)

The limitless décor is rare in Baudelaire. Rather, the décor is more often circumscribed. Circumscription is another means by which

Baudelaire draws attention to the artifice of the work of art. In a letter to Armand Fraisse of 18 February 1860, Baudelaire explains how a feeling of endless distance may best be given by framing the sky in a restricting opening:

> Avez-vous observé qu'un morceau de ciel, aperçu par un soupirail, ou entre deux cheminés, deux rochers, ou par une arcade, etc., donnait une idée plus profonde de l'infini que le grand panorama vu du haut d'une montagne?
> (Corr., I, 675)

Man's aspirations, as we see in Baudelaire's theories concerning the dandy, he likewise views as intensified by the limits which constrain them. At the centre of his pleasure in a painting by Penguilly L'Haridon entitled Les Mouettes is a sense of the hemming in which stimulates a sense of endless expansion: "L'azur intense du ciel et de l'eau, deux quartiers de roche qui font une porte ouverte sur l'infini (vous savez que l'infini paraît plus profond quand il est plus reserré)," (Salon de 1859, P., 1070). The paradoxical intensity is of a similar nature to the radiant opacity of "la vitre," which we noted in "Les Fenêtres."

Not only does circumscription add to the intensity of the work of art, but it also serves as a means of ironical distanciation whereby the sentiment of the poet is at one and the same time presented, or rather made present, and irrealized or theatricalized. This is especially true of the love poetry, where distanciation is primarily achieved through theatricalization. The "literarity" of the theatrical context becomes the symbol par excellence of frustrated desire, as, for example, in the deliberate refusal of "la très-chère . . . nue" in "Les Bijoux" by the insistence on costume and artifice, or the "framing" of the woman in the evocation of his absent mistress ("comme un beau cadre ajoute à la peinture," "Un Fantôme," P., 37) or the pictorial emphasis in the prose poem "L'Invitation au voyage" ("Ne serais-tu pas encadrée dans ton analogie," P., 254). The obvious illustration wherein a very literal type of theatricalization may be found, is the boudoir scene in La Fanfarlo ("Je veux Colombine, rends-moi Colombine," P., 509). The periphrastic invocation of the woman ("Sorcière aux yeux allèchants," "Chanson d'après-midi," P., 37; "Nymphe ténébreuse et chaude," ibid.) serves the same function of derealization through theatricalization; the bombastic periphrasis, whilst seemingly calculated to arouse desire, ironically serves to mask the absence of the woman. The woman, like an insect preserved in amber, is, on occasion, irrealized in a literary fiction ("Imaginez Diane en galant équipage/Parcourant les forêts ou battant les halliers," "Sisina," P., 58). She is but an actress playing her rôle in the drama of love ("Avez-vous vu Théroigne . . . jouant son personnage," ibid.), or the lifeless model in a portrait ("Et tes yeux attirants comme ceux d'un portrait," "L'Amour d'un mensonge," P., 94). Conversely, the presence of the woman is irrealized in a more sordid type of drama, where the use of crude and sarcastic language acts as a counterfoil to the propensity towards Petrarchization ("Je m'avance à l'attaque, et je grimpe aux assauts,/Comme après un cadavre un choeur de vermisseaux," P., 26). Mystic adoration and savage aggression, respectful distance and brutal contact, contact achieved through destruction--these are but some of the sentiments suggested in the theatricalization of human relationships where the poet is safely masked from any real contact, or rather contract, with life.

One might, at this point, draw certain comparisons with La Fanfarlo, which likewise displays traits of presentification and irrealization. Although somewhat Balzacian in its description of the hero's milieu, the solid realism of the tale is strongly counterbalanced by the irrealization introduced by the presence of the narrator which punctures the fiction. The intervention of the narrator in order to explain the motivation of the characters or to express his own opinions ("Cramer haïssait profondément, et il avait, selon moi, parfaitement raison. . .," P., 508) ultimately robs the characters of life, as they become mere puppets in the magic theatre of the author's mind. But is not the autonomy of a fictitious character itself an illusion? The authorial irrealization complements the "faculté comédienne" (P., 487) of the protagonist with his flamboyant gestures and declamatory manner of speech. A similar process of distanciation is achieved by the intervention of the narrator in the prose poems "Le Vieux Saltimbanque" and "Une Mort héroïque." Art carries with it the awareness of the illusion that is art, and not only an awareness but a real-ization of the illusion, or rather the elusion.

This wilful destruction of illusion, whilst characterizing the stance of the Romantic ironist, is by no means limited to the nineteenth century. In the early works of playwrights like Beckett and Ionesco, the audience is never left in any doubt that what they are seeing is not meant to produce an illusion of reality, that they are merely watching people who are trying to show them something by playful pretence. In En attendant Godot, for example, the characters more than once refer to the presence of the audience. Ionesco, in the first version of La Cantatrice chauve, wanted to finish the play with the author coming on stage and insulting the audience. He was dissuaded from doing so; the play now ends by starting again at the point where it began--a device which clearly indicates the artifice not only of the play, but of all theatrical endeavour. Yet, although theatre is illusion, one must remember that compared to the other illusion-producing arts, theatre contains a far greater element of reality through its manipulation of tangible reality.[59]

The problematics of the actor embody the problematics of art inasmuch as they both derive their being (or perhaps lack of it) from the all-embracing consciousness which constitutes the creative act. Just as perception implies both the act of perceiving as well as the thing perceived, so too the essence of art lies both in the creation as well as in the consciousness of the thing created, revealing ultimately the creative Self: "I can never catch myself without a perception," writes Hume in his Treatise on Human Nature, "and can never observe anything but the perception."[60] Like Sartrian man, hopelessly striving to unite his consciousness with the quiddity of his being, the artist, too, seeks to coincide, to become one with his creation; in short, to become a living art-object. Because of the actor's unique relationship to his medium which is himself, the art of the actor would seem to offer the possibility of realizing this ideal, for the actor is both the artist and the work of art. "L'acteur," writes Théophile Gautier, "est une toile sur laquelle il peint lui-même le personnage qu'il veut représenter."[61] The artist's attempt, however, to abolish the distance between life and art is doomed to failure, for art is not identification but representation. Lack of coincidence in man's being is mirrored also in his art. Unable to establish an intimate identification with his work, the artist becomes the ironic spectator of his own creation. In the Romantic poet there lurks a lucid observer of his own exalted flights. "At no time since Saint Paul," writes Henri Peyre of the Romantics, "have there been more human beings rent asunder by an anguishing schizophrenia. The very poets who yearned to be metamorphosed into disembodied angels, to merge their corporeal frames with the wave or the wind, to ascend into the skies with an ethereal minstrel . . . proved to be the most acute analysts of their aspirations."[62] And, what is more, it is through this ironic posture that the creator stresses his independence from his creation precisely at the moment he is accomplishing it. It is at this juncture that the Romantic ironist adopts the mask of Diderot's celebrated "comédien" in _Le Paradoxe sur le comédien_ whose anti-emotionalist stance derives likewise from his hyperlucidity. Janus-like, the Romantic ironist also insinuates himself into the rôle of the Brechtian alienating _histrio_, with his brutal rejection of the traditional magical identification with the spectacle. Indeed, the doctrine of masks itself proposes the intellectual value of the ironic posture (the etymology of irony associates it directly with the idea of the mask, for it derives from the Greek word _eiron_, which means a dissembler). Moreover, the clown is the very incarnation of this ironic position, for in him is symbolized the semi-appropriation of the rôle: unlike the actor's disguise which makes him into another being, the clown's mask serves merely as a disfigurement of his being. He is the plenary symbol of the tragic mésalliance of art and life.

For the nineteenth century, the concept of the theatre is thoroughly profane: the sacred theatre celebrating the communion between actor and mask in a transcendent epiphany--the ilinx--is an absolute impossibility. Sacerdotal possession by the mask is superseded by the dispassionate dissociation of être and paraître in the actor's consciousness of his rôle.[63] Like Diderot,[64] the nineteenth century believed that the art of the actor was the model for all aesthetic creation: "Et pourquoi l'acteur différerait-il du poète, du peintre, de l'orateur, du musicien?"[65] There is, however, a subtle nuance which makes the nineteenth-century interpretation of this parallel very different from that of Diderot: whereas, for Diderot, the comparison of the actor with the poet or the musician was intended as a eulogy (his aim being to gain esteem for the acting profession), for his successors the terms of the comparison are reversed: "Il y a toujours, moralement parlant," writes Balzac,[66] "un comédien dans un poète." Furthermore, for the Romantics the comparison, on both the social and the aesthetic scores, was decidedly derogatory.

For Baudelaire, the significance of the actor resides in the ontological duality which subsists within the individual, who becomes at one and the same time spectator and spectacle, observer and observed. In L'Art philosophique, dating from 1859 but published for the first time in L'Art romantique, Baudelaire notes the following:

> Qu'est-ce que l'art pur suivant la conception moderne? C'est créer une magie suggestive contenant à la fois l'objet et le sujet, le monde extérieur à l'artiste et l'artiste lui-même. (P., 1099)

Summing up his theories on the comic in his conclusion to De l'essence du rire, Baudelaire explains that duality is the fundamental principle governing the comic--which duality may be either external (spectator and spectacle) or, as in the case of the comic artist, internal (artist as spectator of himself). At this point, the particular genre of the comic is subsumed under a more general definition of all artistic phenomena:

> . . . pour conclure, je ferai remarquer . . . que, pour qu'il y ait comique, c'est-à-dire émanation, explosion, dégagement de comique, il faut qu'il y ait deux êtres en présence: --que c'est spécialement dans le rieur, dans le spectateur que gît le comique; --que cependant, relativement à cette loi d'ignorance, il faut faire une exception pour les hommes qui ont fait métier de développer en eux le sentiment du comique et de le tirer d'eux-mêmes pour le divertissement de leurs semblables, lequel phénomène rentre dans la classe de tous les phénomènes artistiques qui dénotent dans l'être humain l'existence d'une dualité permanente, la puissance d'être à la fois soi et un autre. (P., 993)

The sine qua non of the comic performer or the clown and, by extension, the artist, is his sacrosanct duality: "l'artiste n'est artiste qu'à la condition d'être double et de n'ignorer aucun phénomène de sa double nature" (ibid.). Like the philosopher, the poet and the actor are practitioners of the subtle art of dédoublement (". . . un philosophe, un homme qui ait acquis, par habitude, la force de se dédoubler rapidement et d'assister comme spectateur désintéressé aux phénomènes de son moi," ibid., P., 982).

The sublime accomplishment of the actor, his protean disposition, resembles the chameleon nature of the poet or artist:

> Quand je vois un bon portrait, je devine tous les efforts de l'artiste, qui a dû voir d'abord ce qui se faisait voir, mais aussi deviner ce qui se cachait. Je le comparais tout

> à l'heure à l'historien, je pourrais aussi le comparer au comédien, qui par devoir adopte tous les caractères et tous les costumes. (Salon de 1859, P., 1072)

However, the histrionic espousal of these various rôles does not imply complete possession by the rôle; rather, it is a complete possession of the rôle by the hyperconscious artist, and it is this which precludes total identification with the spectacle: "Le propre des vrais poètes . . . est de savoir sortir d'eux-mêmes, et comprendre une toute autre nature" (Corr., I, 334; the italics are mine). Adoption of the rôle is founded upon a profound comprehension of the rôle: the ecstatic union of art and artist is, paradoxically, lucid ("Quand on dit d'un comédien: 'Voilà un bon comédien,' on se sert d'une formule qui implique que sous le personnage se laisse encore deviner le comédien, c'est-à-dire l'art, l'effort, la volonté," "Une Mort héroïque," P., 271).

Achievement of the ilinx by the artist which Baudelaire terms his "objectivité"--that is to say, he has become the object--may, although this is not always the case, be stimulated voluntarily by the consciousness of the artist. It is through the very consciousness of the artist that loss of consciousness, or, in other words, the ilinx, is achieved. Describing Rouvière's philosophy of composition, Baudelaire characterizes thus "le miracle de l'objectivité" (P., 576):

> Et quand le grand acteur, nourri de son rôle, habillé, grimé, se trouve en face de son miroir, horrible ou charmant, séduisant ou répulsif, et qu'il y contemple cette nouvelle personnalité qui doit devenir la sienne pendant quelques heures, il tire de cette analyse un nouveau parachèvement, une espèce de magnétisme de récurrence. Alors l'opération magique est terminée, le miracle de l'objectivité est accompli, et l'artiste peut prononcer son Eureka. Type d'amour ou d'horreur, il peut entrer en scène.
> (Philibert Rouvière, P., 576)

Somewhat lower down on the scale of moral excellence is the involuntary ilinx, which is exemplified in the "bouffon physiomane" Léclaire: "Il faisait des têtes d'expression, et entre deux bougies il illuminait successivement sa figure de toutes les passions. . . . Cet infortuné possédait une telle puissance objective et une si grande aptitude à se grimer. . ." (Quelques Caricaturistes français, P., 1012). Another mode of involuntary objectivity is the artificial paradises with their ecstatic multiplication of the self, oblivious to the reflexive cogito: "On vit plusieurs vies d'homme en l'espace d'une heure. . . . De temps en temps la personnalité disparaît. L'objectivité qui fait certains poètes panthéistiques et les grands comédiens devient telle que vous vous confondez avec les êtres extérieurs" (Du vin et du hachish, P., 388).

The theme of "Une Mort héroïque" is the impossible ilinx, or what may be termed the pathology of artistic creation. In the couple Prince-clown we find an allegorical representation of the duality of the artist: the Prince is the artist-as-spectator, the clown the artist-as-spectacle. Both represent different aspects of the artistic psyche: the analytical Prince stands for artistic consciousness, the clown for the magical incantation of art. The destruction of the clown at the hands of the Prince thus symbolizes the ironic consciousness of the artist "blowing the whistle" on the illusion that is art. The "parfaite idéalisation" (P., 271) which realizes the sacred ilinx cannot be maintained. Fancioulle is the prototype of "l'homme absurde" in the guise of the actor: "l'acteur," writes Camus in Le Mythe de Sisyphe, "règne dans le périssable. De toutes les gloires, on le sait, la sienne est la plus éphémère."[67] The actor as "mime du périssable"[68] is indeed the plenary symbol of the illusory nature of art.

"Le Vieux Saltimbanque" offers a variation on this theme. It is the allegorical representation of the destruction of the spectacle by the spectator. Here, spectacle and spectator are combined in the decrepit figure of the saltimbanque. His exclusion from the "fête" symbolizes his exclusion from "la fête de l'art." He is no longer able to perform, to offer a spectacle, like his colleagues--the paillasses, the Hercules, the dancers--because the spectator in him has superseded and vanquished the spectacle. He is no more than a pure "regard" ("Mais quel regard profond, inoubliable, il promenait sur la foule et les lumières," P., 248). Pure consciousness is incompatible with aesthetic rêverie, even though consciousness in a more attenuated form is a pre-requisite for aesthetic creation.

The impossible coincidence of the artist with the work of art naturally leads one to question to what extent the artist is his creation, to what extent that much over-worked principle of modern literary criticism, the "intentional fallacy," has validity, and to what extent the work of art is, indeed, histrionic. The image of Baudelaire which emerges from his poetry is precisely that, an image, a voluntary transcription of his sentiments. The self-portrait is stylized so as to conform to the personage that Baudelaire chooses to present. The poet, as we have observed in such poems as "La Béatrice" or "Les Sept Vieillards," is the actor of himself, imitating the emotion he seeks to portray, attitudinizing his very being in this pantomime of the self. In a work entitled *A Personal Record*, Conrad notes the following:

> I have always suspected in the effort to bring into play the extremities of emotions the debasing touch of insincerity. In order to move others deeply we must deliberately allow ourselves to be carried away beyond the bounds of our normal sensibility--innocently enough, perhaps, and of necessity, like an actor who raises his voice on the stage above the pitch of natural conversation--but still we have to do that. . . . The danger lies in the writer becoming the victim of his own exaggeration, losing the exact notion of sincerity, and in the end coming to despise the truth itself as something too cold, too blunt for his purpose--as, in fact, not good enough for his insistent emotion.[69]

Is this not precisely the case of Baudelaire's supposed satanism, his proudly defiant exaggeration of the devil's sway over him and of the lures of sin? Is this not true also of his pitiless rending of the veils of self-deception in *Les Fleurs du mal*? The fictional reprobate finds his counterpart in the *cabotin* of legend: witness, for example, Baudelaire's delight in his deliberate rôle-playing, as expressed in a letter to Mme Meurice of 3 January 1856:

> J'ai passé ici pour *agent de police* (*c'est bien fait!*) . . . --pour *pédéraste* (c'est moi-même qui ai répandu ce bruit; et *on m'a cru!*), ensuite j'ai passé pour un *correcteur d'épreuves*, envoyé de Paris pour corriger des épreuves d'*ouvrages infâmes*. *Exaspéré d'être toujours cru*, j'ai répandu le bruit que j'avais *tué* mon père, et que *je l'avais mangé*; que, d'ailleurs, si on m'avait permis de me sauver de France, c'était à cause des services que je rendais à la police française, ET ON M'A CRU! *Je nage dans le déshonneur comme un poisson dans l'eau*. (Corr., II, 437)

Yet the man who could defiantly parade his "goût du travestissement et du masque" ("Les Foules," P., 243)(". . . j'ai un de ces heureux caractères qui tirent une jouissance de la haine et qui se glorifient dans le mépris. Mon goût diaboliquement passionné de la bêtise me fait trouver des plaisirs particuliers dans les travestissements de la calomnie," P., 188), could equally well lament his lack of comprehension by his contemporaries. In a letter to Sainte-Beuve of 24 January 1862 (circa), he writes:

> J'étais très blessé (mais je n'en disais rien) de m'entendre depuis plusieurs années traiter de loup-garou, d'homme impossible et rébarbatif. Une fois, dans un journal méchant, j'avais lu quelques lignes sur ma répulsive laideur, bien faite pour éloigner toute sympathie (c'était dur pour un homme qui a tant aimé le parfum de la femme). Un jour une femme me dit: "C'est singulier, vous êtes fort convenable; je croyais que vous étiez toujours ivre et que vous sentiez mauvais." Elle parlait d'après la légende. (Corr., II, 219)

Having fabricated for himself the legend of "le Prince des Charognes" (Corr., I, 573), he yet seeks to immure himself in what he terms his own "indécrottabilité" (Corr., I, 576).

Branded as an insincere comedian by his contemporaries,[70] as "un faiseur de tours littéraires, un avaleur d'étoupes poétiques, un satanique de foire qui se pince pour se faire hurler,"[71] Baudelaire confesses himself to be the "parfait cabotin" (P., 1557). In the second draft of a tentative preface to Les Fleurs du mal, Baudelaire alludes to the futility of revealing to the public what dosage of instinct and sincerity blend with the charlatanry indispensable to the amalgam which is the work of art:

> Montre-t-on au public, affolé aujourd'hui, indifférent demain, le mécanisme des trucs? Lui explique-t-on les retouches et les variantes improvisées aux répétitions, et jusqu'à quelle dose l'instinct et la sincérité sont mêlés aux rubriques et au charlatanisme indispensable dans l'amalgame de l'oeuvre? Lui révèle-t-on toutes les loques, les fards, les poulies, les chaînes, les repentirs, les épreuves barbouillées, bref toutes les horreurs qui composent le sanctuaire de l'art? (P., 188)[72]

Art is essentially artifice: it partakes of the theatre not only from the mechanical point of view of its construction--it is an ornate artefact--but more especially through the histrionic imitation of sentiment by the poet-*jongleur*, as he juggles with the numerous personas of his creation. It is in this light that we must understand Baudelaire's confession to Ancelle, in a letter of 18 February 1866, concerning the expression of his personal sentiments in *Les Fleurs du mal*; they are but "singerie" and "jonglerie" (*Corr*., II, 610). Indeed, in his correspondence we find repeated protestations against identifying him with his work. In a letter to Alphonse de Calonne of 10 November 1858, he writes: "Il n'y aura plus que les gens d'une mauvaise foi absolue qui ne comprendront pas l'impersonnalité volontaire de mes poésies" (*Corr*., I, 523). In a letter to Armand Fraisse of 12 August 1860 (circa), he is even more emphatic: "Il ne faut livrer rien de personnel à la canaille" (*Corr*., II, 78). And yet had he not confessed to Ancelle, in the letter previously mentioned, that the *Fleurs du mal* were the expression of his innermost feelings ("Faut-il vous dire . . . que dans ce livre *atroce*, j'ai mis tout mon *coeur*,-- toute ma *tendresse*, toute ma *religion* (travestie), toute ma *haine*?," *Corr*., II, 610)? Inasmuch as the image of the poet which emerges from his work is that of the *farceur*, the *cabotin*, we may speak of the sincerity of Baudelaire's poetry: his truth is the mask, the imposture, the histrionic travesty of the self. "Man," writes Wilde, "is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask and he will tell you the truth."[73] The mask is at one and the same time a revelation and a concealment of the poet.[74]

Indeed, to mask is to unmask: the mask is necessary for being true to one's being. "This above all, to thine own self be true," says Polonius to Laertes. But wherein lies the self? The quest for the self implies, in fact, the recognition of a multiplicity of selves. The old question: Who am I? must now, with deeper insight, be modified to Who are I? "Je" is not, as Rimbaud suspected, "un Autre," but "des Autres." "Only he who has selves," writes Felix Pollak, "has self, and only in being true to one's selves can one be true to one's self."[75] The function of the mask in aesthetic creation is thus the revelation and apotheosis of the self through painful self-mediation. The expunction of unmediated emotion by the artist is, paradoxically, achieved through the vivisection of the self.

One is reminded here of the death-rebirth motif in pagan mythology,[76] epitomized in the story of Marsyas in Ovid's Metamorphoses. The satyr Marsyas challenges Apollo to a musical contest. The god wins, of course, and punishes his opponent for daring to issue the challenge by flaying him alive. The tears of the satyr's friends are metamorphosed into a river, which is how the story comes to be in Ovid's collection. Concealed in this story is an aesthetic allegory: Marsyas did not become a great artist, with the power to move his audience in perpetuity (the river being the symbol of life, fertility and rebirth[77]) until his skin was removed. It is significant that the punishment for Marsyas' blasphemy should be through that whereby he has sinned: the artist-*héautontimorouménos* has already suffered the tortures of being flayed alive. The words of Marsyas

("Quid me mihi detrahis?"[78]) clearly suggest the vivisection of the self practised by the artist. That the flaying of the self should imply the revelation and rebirth of the self, would be confirmed by Frazer's[79] explanation concerning the ritual practice of flaying the dead god and hanging his skin upon a pine as a means of effecting his resurrection. One is reminded here of the rôle of the Fool in sacrificial ritual.[80]

"Tempérament de comédien"--such is the epithet which Sartre[81] chooses to characterize Baudelaire. The histrionic proclivity of the author, both in his life and in his work, is given ontological significance by Sartre: it is through the fabrication of the self as a work of art in the form of the dandy, through the creation of a persona in his work that Baudelaire embarks upon the impossible quest of self-coincidence, of being the object of his self:

> L'effort de dédoublement prend ici sa forme la plus nette: être soi-même objet, se parer, se peindre comme une châsse, pour pouvoir s'emparer de l'objet, le contempler longuement et s'y fondre. . . . Travestir, voilà l'occupation favorite de Baudelaire; travestir son corps, ses sentiments et sa vie; il poursuit l'idéal impossible de se créer lui-même. Il ne travaille que pour ne se devoir qu'à soi: il veut se reprendre, se corriger, comme on corrige un tableau ou un poème; il veut être à lui-même son propre poème et c'est là sa comédie.[82]

Dandyism is, in some measure, a surrogate form of poetry: the dandy lives the poetry he cannot create, whereas the poet writes the poetry he dares not live. The two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For the dandy, artistic production is channelled not towards literary creation, but existential creation. The aesthetic mode of being of the Romantics is, as Camus explains in L'Homme révolté, essentially an existential response:

> N'espérant plus la règle ou l'unité de Dieu, obstiné à se rassembler contre un destin ennemi, impatient de maintenir tout ce qui peut l'être encore dans un monde voué à la mort, le révolté romantique cherche une solution dans l'attitude. L'attitude rassemble dans une unité esthétique l'homme livré au hasard et détruit par les violences divines.[83]

The humanization of life attempted through the existential quest is achieved through the dehumanization of the self as it is transformed into a work of art.

The dandy is, however, unable to establish his identity. He is, as Sartre explains, unable to coincide with his own reflection: "Se tenir, se brider, c'est faire naître sous les doigts, sous les brides, le _soi_ que l'on veut posséder. De ce point de vue, le dandysme est un épisode de l'entreprise perpétuellement avortée de Baudelaire."[84] Just as the artist cannot become one with his creation, so the dandy cannot fuse with his objectivized self: there is forever a distance between the observer and the observed, between his reflexive and his reflective consciousness. He is the actor of himself. "Acteur de lui-même," writes Carassus, "en perpétuelle représentation, le dandy ne joue pas totalement et jusqu'au bout sa propre pièce. Il ne se représente qu'en se mutilant."[85] Dandyism is, according to Sartre, not only a fabrication, but a falsification of the self inasmuch as it is the adoption of the _status quo_ and hence of a spurious set of values. It is ultimately a refusal of liberty, whose etiology lies in a fear of the self:

> Il est d'abord dandy par peur de soi. . . . Notons que le dandysme, par sa gratuité, par la libre position de valeurs et d'obligations, s'apparente au choix d'une Morale. Il semble que sur ce plan, Baudelaire ait donné satisfaction à cette transcendance qu'il a découverte en lui dès l'origine. Mais c'est une satisfaction truquée. Le dandysme

> n'est que l'image affaiblie du choix absolu de valeurs inconditionnelles. En fait il se tient dans les limites du Bien traditionnel.[86]

To opt for a priori values is to refuse the real world, to re-institute the magic dimensions of the world of play.[87] The dandy is the supreme illusionist, conjuring up a mysterious form of superiority apparently out of nothing. In short, he is the magician who seeks to ratify the domain of the "irréel." "Is it not better thus our lives to wear/Than join the crushing crowd, doom'd to inflict or bear?"[88]

The theme of the alienated self as presented in Baudelaire's theory of dandyism is prefigured in the theme of social histrionism in Le Neveu de Rameau--a theory which rests on the recognition of the systematic separation of the individual from his actual self, as he adopts one "position" or another as the choreography of society directs. Diderot's dialogue, like Pope's Essay on Man,[89] in fact continues and further particularizes Pascal's sense of the human contradiction, of man as the opposite of himself. The debate will be taken up later by Hegel in the Phenomenology, with its definition of the two historic modes of the self: the "honest soul" and the "disintegrated consciousness." It finds its ultimate development in modern psychoanalysis, with its conception of the conscious system of the mind as a mask for the energies and intentions of the unconscious system. Indeed, the roots of this debate clearly go back to classical antiquity, with its attempt to delineate the boundaries between mind and world.

The mask is, in the final analysis, the expression of man's existential angst, his inability to penetrate the mysteries of life

("Derrière les décors/De l'existence immense. . .," "La Voix," P., 153), to transcend the arbitrary mechanisms of life ("Il arrive que les décors s'écroulent," Le Mythe de Sisyphe[90]) whereby he might grasp a plenitude of being--a kind of existential ilinx--which would abolish the yawning gulf at the heart of existence. Art, like life, is, to quote Barthes, "un système de théâtre"[91] (see Appendix E). Art but adds another dimension of illusion to the fabric of illusion we call reality:

> . . . These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
> Are melted into air, into thin air,
> And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
> And like this insubstantial pageant faded
> Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on; and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.
> (The Tempest, Act IV, sc. i)

It would be pertinent to close with Gwynplaine's poignant address to humanity:

> Je suis tout le monde. L'exception c'est vous.
> Vous êtes la chimère, et je suis la réalité. Je
> suis l'Homme.[92]

NOTES

[1] P.B. Shelley, "Sonnet," Lyrics and Shorter Poems (London: Dent, 1966), p. 275.

[2] J. Chevalier and A. Gheerbrant, Dictionnaire des symboles (Paris: Laffont, 1969), p. 121.

[3] R. Barthes, "Le Théâtre de Baudelaire," in Essais critiques (Paris: Seuil, 1964), p. 43.

[4] Julian Beck and Judith Malina, quoted by T. Cole and H. Krich Chinoy, Actors on Acting: The Theories, Techniques and Practices of the Great Actors of All Times as Told in Their Own Words (New York: Crown, 1975), p. 655.

[5] L.B. Watts, "The Clown: A Comparison of the Comic Figures of Lope de Vega and William Shakespeare." Diss. University of Connecticut, 1966, p. 365.

[6] J. Auger-Duvignaud, L'Acteur: Esquisse d'une sociologie du comédien (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), pp. 154-156.

[7] K. Weinberg, Henri Heine: Romantique défroqué, héraut du symbolisme (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954), p. 44.

[8] V. Jankélévitch, L'Ironie (Paris: Flammarion, 1964), pp. 158-159.

[9] For a detailed study of the semantic content of the word "artiste," see M. Shroder, Icarus: The Image of the Artist in French Romanticism (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 1-11. The Romantics of 1830 in no way limited the word "artiste" to its etymological sense of "technician," or one versed in a craft. "Art" itself meant more than the technique of poetry or of painting: it was a way of life, a quasi-religious concept. "The word poète," writes Shroder, "was a Romantic term of approval and a password to acceptance in the cénacles and the studios . . .; but it carried a broader meaning than 'he who writes verse.' The poet, in the absolute sense in which the Romantics of 1830 understood the word, was the man of imagination, the creative genius--versifier, novelist, painter, sculptor, musician" (p. 9).

[10] Curiosités esthétiques, l'art romantique et autres oeuvres critiques (Paris: Garnier, 1962), p. 609.

[11] J.-P. Sartre, "L'Acteur," in Un Théâtre de situations, ed. M. Contat and M. Rybalka (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), p. 196.

[12] Ibid., p. 199.

[13] J.-P. Sartre, L'Etre et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), p. 164.

[14] R. Barthes, "La Littérature aujourd'hui," in Essais critiques, op. cit., p. 164.

[15] For an explanation of the various types of interaction operative within language, see R. Barthes, "L'Imagination du signe," in Essais critiques, op. cit., pp. 206-212.

[16] A. Giraud, "L'Alphabet," Héros et Pierrots (Paris: Fischbacher, 1898), p. 153.

[17] W.B. Yeats, "A Coat," Selected Poetry, ed. A.N. Jeffares (London: Macmillan, 1976), p. 63.

[18] J.-L. Bédouin, Les Masques (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967), pp. 19-20.

[19] A. Vitu, "Pierrot valet de la mort," L'Echo, 27 September 1846, p. 1.

[20] H. von Hofmannsthal, quoted by G. Bachelard, L'Air et les songes (Paris: Corti, 1943), p. 145.

[21] G. Poulet, "Baudelaire et la critique d'identification," Paragone, 214 (1967), 35.

[22] Ibid., pp. 22-24.

[23] Cf. Fusées: "Moi c'est tous; tous c'est moi" (P., 1248).

[24] R. Bourgeois, L'Ironie romantique: Spectacle et jeu de Mme de Staël à G. de Nerval (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1974), p. 32.

[25] Cf. B. Crémieux, "Sincérité et imagination," Nouvelle Revue Française, 12 (1924), 538-548, for a discussion on the dissociation of the self in twentieth-century literature.

[26] J. Keats, letter to R. Woodhouse (27 October 1818), in Criticism: The Major Statements, ed. C. Kaplan (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), pp. 352-353. Cf. P.B. Shelley, "An Exhortation," Lyrics and Shorter Poems, op. cit., p. 337, where the poet is likewise compared to the chameleon.

[27] Cf. Théophile Gautier: "La biographie d'un homme dont les aventures les plus dramatiques se jouent silencieusement sous la coupole de son cerveau. . ." (P., 676).

[28] Cf. the following portrait of the artist from a contemporary novel by P.-M. Alhoy entitled Les Mémoires de Bilboquet, recueillis par un bourgeois de Paris (Paris: Librairie Nouvelle, 1854), I, 58-59. In a scene which prefigures the tragic finale of I Pagliacci, Bilboquet recounts his anguish while playing the rôle of Arlequin to his mistress Atala's Colombine: "J'étais furieux. Il me fallait débiter des lazzis et des pasquinades avec la rage dans le coeur. Il me fallait sourire à Atala, tomber à ses genoux, l'embrasser, et j'avais voulu la lancer par-dessus le bastinage du 'Jonas.' Telle est la vie de l'artiste; le fard sur la joue, le rire aux lèvres, la gaieté dans les yeux et la mort dans l'âme."

[29] N. Osmond, "Rhetoric and Self-Expression in Romantic Poetry," in French Literature and Its Background, ed. J. Cruickshank (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 18-36.

[30] A. Camus, L'Homme révolté, quoted by E. Carassus, Le Mythe du dandy (Paris: Colin, 1971), p. 290.

[31] P.-M. Alhoy, op. cit., II, 28.

[32] Un Anglais à Paris: Notes et souvenirs, 1835-1848, quoted by J. Guex, L'Histoire et la société de 1815-1848 (Paris: Fischbacher, 1900), p. 69.

[33] B.H. Kremen ("Baudelaire's Celestial Décors," Philological Quarterly, 47 [1968], 237-252), however, interprets the mists and fogs as symbolizing the neurasthenic tensions and the spiritual obscurity to which the actor is prey.

[34] J. Auger-Duvignaud, op. cit., p. 11.

[35] It is interesting to note the variant found in Le Présent of 15 October 1857, where Baudelaire speaks of "tout le charlatanisme de l'artiste."

[36] T. de Banville, quoted by A. Tabarant, La Vie artistique au temps de Baudelaire (Paris: Mercure de France, 1963), p. 294.

[37] The 1854 version of this poem brings out more clearly the importance of mental cerebration to the creation of the illusion:

> Mais nul n'a jamais vu les hauts faits glorieux,
> Les triomphes bruyants, les fêtes solennelles,
> Qui s'allument alors au fond de leurs cervelles.
> (Les Fleurs du mal, ed. A. Adam [Paris: Garnier, 1961], p. 122)

[38] Cf. "Le Voyage":

> Tel le vieux vagabond, piétinant dans la boue,
> Rêve, le nez en l'air, de brillants paradis;
> Son oeil ensorcelé découvre une Capoue
> Partout où la chandelle illumine un taudis.
> (P., 123)

[39] E. Littré, quoted by E. Souffrin Le Breton, "Banville et la poétique du décor," in French Nineteenth-Century Painting and Literature, ed. U. Finke (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 82.

[40] A. Adam, op. cit., p. 343.

[41] J. Crépet, "Baudelaire et Duranty," in Propos sur Baudelaire (Paris: Mercure de France, 1957), pp. 56-63. Cf. also M. Parturier and D. Privat, "Baudelaire et Duranty," Bulletin du Bibliophile, 1 (1953), 1-13.

[42] C. Mauron, Le Dernier Baudelaire (Paris: Corti, 1966), p. 58.

[43] R. Barthes, "Le Théâtre de Baudelaire," in Essais critiques, op. cit., p. 46.

[44] It is interesting to note that Dumas fils, a member of the "école du bon sens" stated his main preoccupation to be: "d'agiter non plus des grelots, mais des questions." Quoted by M. Descotes, "Baudelaire et le théâtre," Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 13 (1961), 205.

[45] For a study of Baudelaire's appreciation of the classical theatre, see J. Pommier, *Dans les chemins de Baudelaire* (Paris: Corti, 1945), pp. 122-144.

[46] Cf. J. Pommier, "Les Salons de Diderot et leur influence au dix-neuvième siècle: Baudelaire et le *Salon de 1846*," *Revue des Cours et Conférences*, 37 (1936), 437-452.

[47] M. Descotes, op. cit., p. 205.

[48] Quoted by M. Descotes, ibid., p. 212.

[49] R. Barthes, op. cit., p. 44.

[50] Baudelaire characterizes, in a similar vein, the "dramatic" style of Guys ("Ainsi, M.G., traduisant fidèlement ses propres impressions, marque avec une énergie instinctive les points culminants ou lumineux d'un object [ils peuvent être culminants ou lumineux au point de vue dramatique], ou ses principales caractéristiques. . . ," P., 1166), or the "faconde dramatique et quasi-littéraire de Lebrun" (*L'Oeuvre et la vie d'Eugène Delacroix*, P., 1116), or the melodramatic over-emphasis in the paintings of M. Lehmann ("Quant à leur tournure et à leur esprit, ces deux figures me rappellent l'emphase des acteurs de l'ancien Bobino, du temps qu'on y jouait des mélodrames," P., 918), or, finally, the pantomimic extravagance of Cruickshank's caricatures, parallelled by the dramatic gesticulation of Delacroix's Romantic figures ("Et remarquez bien que ce n'est jamais par la grimace, par la minutie, par la tricherie de moyens, que M. Delacroix arrive à ce prodigieux résultat; mais par l'ensemble, par l'accord profond, complet, entre sa couleur, son sujet, son dessin, et par la dramatique gesticulation de ses figures," *Exposition universelle de 1855*, P., 974). The following example is also instructive: in reference to M. Troyon, Baudelaire notes: "Il y a de longues années, il nous étonnait déjà par l'aplomb de sa fabrication, par la *rondeur* de son jeu, comme on dit au théâtre..." (*Salon de 1859*, P., 1078).

[51] R. Barthes, op. cit., p. 44.

[52] M. Descotes, op. cit.

[53] D.J. Mossop, *Baudelaire's Tragic Hero: A Study of the Architecture of* Les Fleurs du mal (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

[54] R. Freedman, "Poet and Mask: The Drama of *Les Fleurs du mal*," *Texas Quarterly*, 1 (1958), 52-59.

[55] R. King, "Dialogue in Baudelaire's Poetic Universe," *L'Esprit Créateur*, 13 (1973), 114-123.

[56] E. Sewell, quoted by W. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 71.

[57] J. Pommier, *Dans les chemins de Baudelaire*, op. cit., p. 357. Cf. also J. Prévost, *Baudelaire: Essai sur la création et l'inspiration poétiques* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1967).

[58] It is interesting to note that these lines do not occur in later editions of the poem (*La Vie Parisienne*, 13 August 1864; *La Nouvelle Revue de Paris*, 25 December 1864). However, the following line does occur in the latter: "Oui, en vérité, c'est bien *là* le décor que je cherchais" (P., 265).

[59] For discussion of this point, see M. Esslin, *An Anatomy of Drama* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), pp. 86-87.

[60] D. Hume, quoted by R. Stern, "Inside Narcissus," *Yale Review*, 1978, p. 407.

[61] T. Gautier, "Du Physique des acteurs," *Le Figaro*, 10 October 1836, quoted by R. Chambers, "L'Art sublime du comédien ou le regardant et le regardé: Autour d'un mythe baudelairien," *Saggi e Richerche di Letteratura Francese*, 11 (Rome: Bulzoni, 1971), p. 257.

[62] H. Peyre, *Literature and Sincerity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 141. In this context, see also: Paul de Man, "Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image," in *Romanticism and Consciousness*, ed. H. Bloom (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1970), pp. 65-77. Romantic imagery, if we follow the argument of de Man, attempts to assume the ontological primacy of the natural object, to abolish the distance between *res* and *verba*. Poetic language cannot, however, coincide with the natural object, and for this reason poetic language can never be more than an intent of consciousness: "For it is the essence of language to be capable of origination, but of never achieving the absolute identity with itself that exists in the natural object. Poetic language can do nothing but originate anew over and over again: it is always constitutive, able to posit regardless of presence but, by the same token, unable to give a foundation to what it posits except as an intent of consciousness. The word is always a free presence to the mind, the means by which the permanence of natural entities can be put into question and thus negated, time and again, in the endlessly widening spiral of the dialectic" (p. 69).

[63] On this theme, see R. Chambers, op. cit.

[64] Diderot's Paradoxe was known since 1830. For discussion of this point, see J. Pommier, "Les Salons de Diderot et leur influence au dix-neuvième siècle: Baudelaire et le Salon de 1846," op. cit.

[65] D. Diderot, quoted by A. Villiers, La Psychologie du comédien (Paris: Mercure de France, 1942), p. 83.

[66] H. de Balzac, quoted by R. Chambers, op. cit., p. 195.

[67] A. Camus, Le Mythe de Sisyphe: Essai sur l'absurde (Paris: Gallimard, 1942), p. 107.

[68] Ibid., p. 109.

[69] J. Conrad, A Personal Record, quoted by R. Stern, op. cit., p. 415. On the question of sincerity, see also: (i) D. Davie, "On Sincerity," Encounter, 31 (1968), 61-66; (ii) B. Crémieux, op. cit.; (iii) D. Justice, "Baudelaire: The Question of His Sincerity," Texas Quarterly, 1 (1958), 36-41.

[70] We realize, however, that Baudelaire's legend has changed considerably over the years. For a detailed study of Baudelaire's legend, the way in which the "chantre déliquescent" of the Second Empire and Third Republic is gradually transformed into a sincere and christian poet, see A.E. Carter, Baudelaire et la critique française, 1868-1917 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1963).

[71] A. Claveau, "Baudelaire," Le Soleil, 20 October 1892, quoted by A.E. Carter, ibid., p. 140.

[72] Cf. Edgar Poe, The Philosophy of Composition: Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe (Cambridge: Riverside, 1956), p. 454: "Most writers--poets in special--prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy--an ecstatic intuition--and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought--at the true purpose seized only at the last moment--at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view--at the cautious selections and rejections--at the painful erasures and interpolations--in a word, at the wheels and pinions--the tackle for scene-shifting--the step-ladders and demon-traps--the cock's feathers, the red paint and the black patches, which in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, constitute the properties of the literary histrio."

[73] O. Wilde, quoted by L. Trilling, Sincerity and Authenticity (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 117.

[74] Had we but world enough and time, we might discuss, here, Yeats' concept of the anti-self as expressed in the poem "Ego Dominus tuus":

> Ille. By the help of an image
> I call to my own opposite, summon all
> That I have handled least, least looked upon.
> . . . .
> I call to the mysterious one who yet
> Shall walk the wet sands by the edge of the stream
> And look most like me, being indeed my double,
> And prove of all imaginable things
> The most unlike, being my anti-self,
> And, standing by these characters, disclose
> All that I seek. . . . (W.B. Yeats, op. cit., pp. 77-79)

In this context, see also the poem entitled "Among School Children": "O body swayed to music, O brightening glance/How can we know the dancer from the dance?" (ibid., p. 130).

[75] F. Pollak, quoted by A. Nin, The Diary of A. Nin (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1974), V, 162.

[76] J. Frazer, The Golden Bough, ed. T.H. Gaster (New York: Criterion, 1959).

[77] Ibid., p. 377.

[78] Ovid, Metamorphoses, ed. W.S. Anderson (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), Book VI, 1.385.

[79] J. Frazer, op. cit., p. 379.

[80] E. Welsford, "The Fool as Mascot and Scapegoat," in The Fool: His Social and Literary History (Gloucester, Mass.: Smith, 1966), pp. 55-77.

[81] J.-P. Sartre, Baudelaire (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), p. 198.

[82] Ibid., pp. 170 and 199.

[83] A. Camus, L'Homme révolté, quoted by E. Carassus, op. cit., p. 290.

[84] J.-P. Sartre, op. cit., p. 170.

[85] E. Carrassus, op. cit., p. 64.

[86] J.-P. Sartre, op. cit., p. 168.

[87] Cf. B. Rubin, "Anti-Husbandry and Self-Creation: A Comparison of the Restoration Rake and Baudelaire's Dandy," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 14 (1973), 533-592, where the irresponsibility of the dandy and the rake, who choose to lead lives of aesthetic design and mimetic playfulness in a restricted playground world, is discussed.

[88] Byron, Childe Harold, Canto III, stanza 71, The Poetical Works of Byron (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), p. 46.

[89] A. Pope, An Essay on Man (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), p. 18:

> In doubt his Mind or Body to prefer,
> Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
> Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
> Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
> Chaos of Thought and Passion, all confused;
> Still by himself abused, or disabused;
> Created half to rise, and half to fall;
> Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
> Sole judge of Truth, in endless Error hurled:
> The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

[90] A. Camus, Le Mythe de Sisyphe: Essai sur l'absurde (Paris: Gallimard, 1942), p. 27.

[91] R. Barthes, "Littérature et signification," in Essais critiques (Paris: Seuil, 1964), p. 275.

[92] V. Hugo, L'Homme qui rit (Paris: Flammarion, 1925), II, 291.

EPILOGUE

> Enfin, il m'est permis de proférer l'irrésistible ouf! que lâche avec tant de bonheur tout simple mortel, non privé de sa rate et condamné à une course forcée, quand il peut se jeter dans l'oasis de repos tant espérée depuis longtemps. Dès le commencement, je l'avouerai volontiers, les caractères béatifiques qui composent le mot FIN apparaissaient à mon cerveau, revêtus de leur peau noire, comme de petits baladins éthiopiens qui exécuteraient la plus aimable des danses de caractère. (Salon de 1859, P., 1096-1097)

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APPENDIX A

The following references to the term bouffon, used to connote what is comical or derisory, are listed in chronological order. For purposes of completion, the references which appear in the text are also included. The dates referred to are those of first publication rather than of original composition.

(a) Comment on paie ses dettes quand on a du génie (1845):

> . . . il avisa un petit jeune homme à la physionomie hargneuse et spirituelle, qui lui avait fait naguère une ébouriffante préface pour la Grandeur et décadence de César Birotteau, et qui était déjà connu dans le journalisme pour sa verve bouffone et quasi impie. (P., 468)

(b) L'Ecole païenne (1852):

> Il y a quelques années, Daumier fit un ouvrage remarquable, l'Histoire ancienne, qui était pour ainsi dire la meilleure paraphrase du mot célèbre: Qui nous délivrera des Grecs et des Romains? Daumier s'est abattu brutalement sur l'antiquité et la mythologie, et a craché dessus. Et le bouillant Achille, et le prudent Ulysse, et la sage Pénélope, et Télémaque, ce grand dadais, et la belle Hélène, qui perdit Troie, et la brûlante Sapho, cette patronne des hystériques, et tous enfin nous apparurent dans une laideur bouffonne qui rappelait ces vieilles carcasses d'acteurs classiques qui prennent une prise de tabac dans les coulisses. (P., 625)

(c) Letter to Théodore Olivier, 18 April 1852:

> Tout cela ne serait que grotesque et bouffon, si vous n'aviez pas causé dans ma cervelle une agitation nuisible. (Corr., I, 197)

(d) Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe (1857):

> Combien eût-il ri, de ce rire méprisant du poète qui ne grossit jamais la grappe de badauds, s'il était tombé,

comme cela m'est arrivé récemment, sur cette phrase mirifique qui fait rêver aux bouffonnes et volontaires absurdités des paillasses, et que j'ai trouvé se pavanant perfidement dans un journal plus que grave. (*Curiosités esthétiques, l'art romantique et autres oeuvres critiques* de Baudelaire [Paris: Garnier, 1962], p. 625.)

(e) *Quelques Caricaturistes français* (1857):

(i) C'est véritablement une oeuvre curieuse à contempler aujourd'hui que cette vaste série de bouffonneries historiques qu'on appelait la *Caricature*, grandes archives comiques, où tous les artistes de quelque valeur apportèrent leur contingent. C'est un tohu-bohu, un capharnaüm, une prodigieuse comédie satanique, tantôt bouffonne, tantôt sanglante, où défilent, affublées de costumes variés et grotesques, toutes les honorabilités politiques. Parmi tous ces grands hommes de la monarchie naissante, que de noms déjà oubliés! Cette fantastique épopée est dominée, couronnée par la pyramidale et olympienne *Poire* de processive mémoire. . . . C'est aujourd'hui un sujet d'énorme étonnement, quand on feuillette ces bouffonnes archives, qu'une guerre si furieuse ait pu se continuer pendant des années.

Tout à l'heure, je crois, j'ai dit: bouffonnerie sanglante. En effet, ces dessins sont souvent pleins de sang et de fureur. . . . Ces échantillons suffisent pour montrer combien sérieuse est souvent la pensée de Daumier, et comme il attaque vivement son sujet. Feuilletez son oeuvre, et vous verrez défiler devant vos yeux, dans sa réalité fantastique et saisissante, tout ce qu'une grande ville contient de vivantes monstruosités. Tout ce qu'elle renferme de trésors effrayants, grotesques, sinistres et bouffons, Daumier le connaît. (P., 999, 1000, 1004 respectively.)

(ii) Baudelaire repeats verbatim his description of Daumier's satirical sketches of Olympus in *L'Ecole païenne* (supra, P., 1006).

(iii) . . . Il y avait à Paris une espèce de bouffon physiomane, nommé Léclaire, qui courrait les guinguettes, les caveaux et les petits théâtres. Il faisait des *têtes d'expression*, et entre deux bougies il illuminait successivement sa figure de toutes les passions. . . . Cet homme, accident bouffon plus commun qu'on ne le suppose dans les castes excentriques . . . cet infortuné possédait une telle puissance objective et une si grande aptitude à se grimer. (P., 1012)

(f) Le Poëme du haschisch (1858-1860):

> Des singes gambadants, des satyres bouffons semblaient s'amuser de cette prisonnière étendue, condamnée à l'immobilité. (P., 369)

(g) Letter to Armand Fraisse, 18 February 1860:

> Quel est donc l'imbécile . . . qui traite si légèrement le Sonnet et n'en voit pas la beauté pythagorique? Parce que la forme est contraignante, l'idée jaillit plus intense. Tout va bien au Sonnet, la bouffonnerie, la galanterie, la passion, la rêverie, la méditation philosophique. (Corr., I, 676)

(h) Letter to Alfred Guichon, 26 May 1860:

> Dans le courant de l'année dernière ont paru, à la Revue Française, mais avec quelques fautes d'impression: "Le Corbeau," accompagné d'un article de moi et d'un article d'Edgar Poe sur son propre poème, --le tout sous le titre: Genèse d'un poème; --Eleonora, nouvelle, dans le genre de Ligeia et de Morella; --Un Evénement à Jérusalem, nouvelle bouffonne. (Corr., II, 51)

(i) R. Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris (1861):

> Aussitôt que les affiches annoncèrent que Richard Wagner ferait entendre dans la salle des Italiens des fragments de ses compositions, un fait amusant se produisit, que nous avons déjà vu, et qui prouve le besoin instinctif, précipité, des Français de prendre sur toute chose leur parti avant d'avoir délibéré ou examiné. Les uns annoncèrent des merveilles, et les autres se mirent à dénigrer à outrance des oeuvres qu'ils n'avaient pas encore entendues. Encore aujourd'hui dure cette situation bouffonne, et l'on peut dire que jamais sujet inconnu ne fut tant discuté. (P., 1209)

(j) Letter to Mme Aupick, 25 December 1861:

> Quand je te verrai, je te ferai peut-être rire en te racontant quelques-unes de mes visites [aux membres de l'Académie]. . . . Ma visite à M. Viennet a été une comédie à faire un volume. Dès le commencement, déjà plein de découragement, de dégoût et de rate, je fus pris d'une idée que je crus lumineuse. Voyant combien je perdais de temps, je voulus que mes visites fussent payées comme celles des médecins, non pas par mes malades, mais par le public; c'est-à-dire que je conçus le projet d'en rédiger le compte rendu jour à jour, d'en faire ainsi un livre bouffon qui aurait été publié au beau milieu des discussions relatives

> à l'élection, ou après l'élection. Tu devines le résultat: L'Académie barrée à jamais, d'abord, et puis accusation de déloyauté. On m'aurait accusé de m'être introduit chez les gens dans le but préconçu de les faire poser pour moi dans une attitude comique. (Corr., II, 202-203).

(k) L'Oeuvre et la vie d'Eugène Delacroix (1863):

> Une seule fois, je crois, il a fait une tentative dans le drôle et le bouffon, et comme s'il avait deviné que cela était au delà et au-dessous de sa nature, il n'y est pas revenu. (P., 1132)

(l) Le Peintre de la vie moderne (1863):

> La Turquie a fourni aussi à notre cher G. d'admirables motifs de compositions . . . les danses frénétiques des baladins du troisième sexe (jamais l'expression bouffonne de Balzac ne fut plus applicable que dans le cas présent). . . . (P., 1172-1173)

(m) Letter to Ancelle, 13 October 1864:

> C'est la première fois que je suis contraint d'écrire un livre [Pauvre Belgique], absolument humoristique, à la fois bouffon et sérieux, et où il me faut parler de tout. (Corr., II, 409)

(n) Letter to Julien Lemer, 3 February 1865:

> Je vous préviens que Pauvre Belgique! est un livre anti-libre penseur, fortement tourné au bouffon. (Corr., II, 443)

(o) Letter to Auguste Poulet-Malassis, 1 March 1865:

> J'observai que ce polémiste [Proudhon] mangeait énormément et qu'il ne buvait presque pas, tandis que ma sobriété et ma soif contrastaient avec son appétit. "Pour un homme de lettres, lui dis-je, vous mangez étonnamment."
>
> "C'est que j'ai de grandes choses à faire," me répondit-il; avec une telle simplicité que je ne pus deviner s'il parlait sérieusement ou s'il voulait bouffonner. (Corr., II, 472)

(p) Letter to Catulle Mendès, 19 January 1866:

> Ce volume [Les Epaves] a été fait sans que je m'en mêlasse; vous y trouverez des bagatelles que vous ne connaissez pas, et même des bouffonneries. (Corr., II, 574)

(q) Letter to Ancelle, 30 January 1866:

> Souvenez-vous que *La Belgique déshabillé* est un croquis très grave, très sévère, de *suggestion sévère*, sous une apparence bouffonne, à l'excès, quelquefois. (*Corr.*, II, p. 581)

(r) Letter to Jules Janin (1887):

> Toujours Horace et Margoton! Vous vous garderiez bien de choisir Juvénal, Lucain ou Pétrone: Celui-là [sic] avec ses terrifiantes impuretés, ses bouffonneries attristantes. (P., 804)

(s) *Fusées* (1887):

> (i) L'esprit de bouffonnerie peut ne pas exclure la charité, mais c'est rare. (P., 1251)
>
> (ii) Le monde va finir. La seule raison pour laquelle il pourrait durer, c'est qu'il existe. Que cette raison est faible, comparée à toutes celles qui annoncent le contraire, particulièrement à celle-ci: qu'est-ce que le monde a désormais à faire sous le ciel? --Car, en supposant qu'il continuât à exister matériellement, serait-ce une existence digne de ce nom et du dictionnaire historique? Je ne dis pas que le monde sera réduit aux expédients et au désordre bouffon des républiques du Sud-Amérique, --que peut-être même nous retournerons à l'état sauvage. . . . (P., 1263)

(t) *Idéolus* (1932):

> Le Marquis: Michel-Ange est fort beau: son Jugement Dernier
> Pour chasser un démon vaut mieux qu'un bénitier.
>
> Socrates: Ce tableau, Monseigneur, comme au temps des agapes,
> A fait jeûner un moine et converti trois papes.
>
> Le Marquis: Toujours *rude* bouffon! (P., 550)

APPENDIX B

I The references to irony in the works of Baudelaire are numerous. They are listed, here, in chronological order. For purposes of completion, those references to irony which appear in the text are also included. The dates referred to are those of first publication rather than of original composition.

(a) Plan et notes pour Les Petits Poèmes en prose (n.d.):

> Mélange d'emphase sincère et d'emphase ironique. (P., 317)

(b) Plans et projets (n.d.):

> Je suis un vrai Débauché. J'aime l'orgie, et j'y apporte le condiment de l'ironie. (P., 523)

(c) Salon de 1845:

> (i) . . . voilà du Decamps, du vrai et du meilleur--nous retrouvons donc enfin cette ironie, ce fantastique, j'allais presque dire ce comique que nous regrettions tant à l'aspect des premiers. (P., 823)
>
> (ii) Ce n'est qu'un semblant de peinture sérieuse; ce n'est pas là le caractère si connu de cette figure fine, mordante, ironique. (P., 841)
>
> (iii) Et encore, il y a ceci de faux dans notre comparaison, que Ribera n'est homme de métier que par-dessus le marché--qu'il est en outre plein de fougue, d'originalité, de colère et d'ironie. (P., 862)

(d) Salon de 1846:

> M. Decamps sait faire comprendre un personnage avec quelques lignes. . . . C'était un dessin d'homme d'esprit, presque de caricaturiste; car il possédait je ne sais quelle bonne humeur ou fantaisie moqueuse, qui s'attaquaient parfaitement aux ironies de la nature. (P., 906)

(e) Les Contes de Champfleury (1848):

(i) Cette nouvelle démontre bien la parenté antique de l'auteur avec quelques écrivains allemands et anglais, esprits mélancoliques comme lui, doublés d'une ironie involontaire et persistante. (P., 601)

(ii) Peintres naturalistes enragés qui vous nourrissez de carrottes pour mieux les dessiner, et vous habilleriez de plumes pour mieux peindre un perroquet, lisez et relisez ces hautes leçons empreintes d'une ironie allemande énorme. (P., 602)

(f) Du vin et du hachish (1851):

La sagesse de ce malheureux vous réjouit outre mesure, son sang-froid vous pousse aux dernières limites de l'ironie. (P., 336)

(g) Le Comédien Rouvière (1856):

Rouvière, qui n'avait jamais joué que des natures amères, féroces, ironiques, atroces, a joué admirablement un rôle paternel, doux, aimable, idyllique. (P., 577)

(h) "L'Héautontimorouménos" (1857):

Ne suis-je pas un faux accord
Dans la divine symphonie,
Grâce à la vorace Ironie
Qui me secoue et qui me mord? (P., 74)

(i) "L'Irréparable" (1867):

Un phare ironique, infernal,
Flambeau de grâces sataniques
Soulagement et gloire uniques
--La conscience dans le Mal! (P., 76)

(j) "Je t'adore à l'égal. . . ." (1867):

Je t'adore à l'égal de la voûte nocturne,
O vase de tristesse, ô grande taciturne,
Et t'aime d'autant plus, belle, que tu me fuis,
Et que tu me parais, ornement de mes nuits,
Plus ironiquement accumuler les lieues
Qui séparent mes bras des immensités bleues. (P., 26)

(k) Quelques Caricaturistes français (1857):

> Le ciel parisien, fidèle à son habitude ironique dans les grands fléaux et les grands remues-ménages politiques, le ciel est splendide. (P., 1004)

(l) Madame Bovary (1857):

> (i) Il m'eût été facile de retrouver sous le tissu minutieux de Madame Bovary, les hautes facultés d'ironie et de lyrisme qui illuminent à outrance La Tentation de Saint Antoine. (P., 656)
>
> (ii) Il m'eût été facile de montrer . . . que M. Gustave Flaubert a volontairement voilé dans Madame Bovary les hautes facultés lyriques et ironiques manifestées sans réserve dans La Tentation. (P., 857)

(m) Le Poëme du haschisch (1858-1860):

> Quel est le philosophe français qui, pour railler les doctrines allemandes modernes, disait: "Je suis un dieu qui ai mal dîné?" Cette ironie ne mordrait pas sur un esprit enlevé par le haschisch; il répondrait tranquillement: "Il est possible que j'aie mal dîné, mais je suis un Dieu." (P., 382-383)

(n) "Danse macabre" (1859):

> En tout climat, sous tout soleil, la Mort t'admire
> En tes contorsions, risible Humanité,
> Et souvent, comme toi, se parfumant de myrrhe,
> Mêle son ironie à ton insanité. (P., 94)

(o) "Les Sept Vieillards" (1859):

> Aurais-je, sans mourir, contemplé le huitième,
> Sosie inexorable, ironique et fatal,
> Dégoûtant Phénix, fils et père de lui-même? (P., 84)

(p) La Double Vie (1859):

> (i) L'intention laissée en route, le rêve oublié dans une auberge, le projet barré par l'obstacle, le malheur et l'infirmité jaillissant du succès comme les plantes vénéneuses d'une terre grasse et négligée, le regret mêlé d'ironie, le regard jeté en arrière comme celui d'un vagabond qui se recueille un instant, l'incessant mécanisme de la vie terrestre, taquinant et déchirant à chaque minute l'étoffe de la vie idéale. (P., 658)

(ii) Mon Cousin Don Quixote est un morceau des plus remarquables et bien fait pour mettre en lumière les deux grandes qualités de l'auteur, qui sont le sentiment du beau moral et l'ironie qui naît du spectacle de l'injustice et de la sottise. (P., 659)

(q) Théophile Gautier (1859):

Les Jeune-France prouvèrent bientôt que l'école se complétait. Quelque léger que cet ouvrage puisse paraître à plusieurs, il renferme de grandes mérites. Outre la beauté du diable, c'est-à-dire la grâce charmante et l'audace de la jeunesse, il contient le rire, et le meilleur rire. Evidemment, à une époque pleine de duperies, un auteur s'installait en pleine ironie et prouvait qu'il n'était pas dupe. (P., 682-683)

(r) "Le Cygne" (1860):

Je vois ce malheureux, mythe étrange et fatal,

Vers le ciel quelquefois, comme l'homme d'Ovide,
Vers le ciel ironique et cruellement bleu,
Sur son cou convulsif tendant sa tête avide,
Comme s'il adressait des reproches à Dieu! (P., 82)

(s) Un Mangeur d'opium (1860):

Midas changeait en or tout ce qu'il touchait, et se sentait martyrisé par cet ironique privilège. De même, le mangeur d'opium transformait en réalités inévitables tous les objets de sa rêverie. (P., 426)

(t) Théodore de Banville (1861):

Aussi, dans ses oeuvres, vous n'entendrez pas les dissonances, les discordances des musiques du sabbat, non plus que les glapissements de l'ironie, cette vengeance du vaincu. (P., 740)

(u) Une Réforme à l'Académie (1862):

(i) Tout l'article est un chef-d'oeuvre plein de bonne humeur, de gaieté, de sagesse, de bon sens et d'ironie. (P., 760)

(ii) Rien n'y manque, ni l'appréciation ironique des fausses célébrités, ni l'accent profond, convaincu, d'un écrivain qui voudrait relever l'honneur de la compagnie à laquelle il appartient. (ibid.)

(iii) L'odysée de l'infortuné M. de Carné, éternel candidat, qui "erre maintenant comme une ombre aux confins des deux élections," est un morceau de haute et succulente ironie. (P., 761)

(v) "L'Examen de minuit" (1863):

La pendule, sonnant minuit,
Ironiquement nous engage
A nous rappeler quel usage
Nous fîmes du jour qui s'enfuit. (P., 168)

(w) L'Oeuvre et la vie d'Eugène Delacroix (1863):

. . . l'homme supérieur est obligé, plus que tout autre, de veiller à sa défense personnelle. On peut dire que toute société est en guerre contre lui. Nous avons pu vérifier le cas plus d'une fois. Sa politesse, on l'appelle froideur; son ironie, si mitigée qu'elle soit, méchanceté; son économie, avarice. (P., 1140)

(x) "A celle qui est trop gaie" (1864)

Quelquefois dans un beau jardin
Où je trainais mon atonie,
J'ai senti, comme une ironie,
Le soleil déchirer mon sein. (P., 140)

(y) "Portraits des maîtresses" (1867):

L'histoire de mon amour ressemble à un interminable voyage sur une surface pure et polie comme un miroir, vertigineusement monotone, qui avait réfléchi tous mes sentiments et mes gestes avec l'exactitude ironique de ma propre conscience, de sorte que je ne pouvais pas me permettre un geste ou un sentiment déraisonnable sans apercevoir immédiatement le reproche muet de mon inséparable spectre. (P., 296)

(z) Fusées (1867):

Deux qualités littéraires fondamentales: surnaturalisme et ironie. (P., 1256)

(aa) Letter to Jules Janin (1887):

(i) Ainsi, l'auteur de L'Ane mort et la femme guillotinée ne veut plus entendre l'ironie; il ne veut pas qu'on parle de la mort, de la douleur, de la brièveté des sentiments humains: "Ecartez de moi les images funèbres; loin de moi, tous ces ricanements! Laissez-moi traduire Horace, et le savourer à ma guise, Horace, un vrai

> amateur des flonflons, un brave littératisant, dont la lecture ne fait pas mal aux nerfs, comme font toutes ces discordantes lyres modernes. (P., 800-801)

(ii) Examinons donc ce coeur d'Henri Heine jeune. Les fragments que vous citez sont charmants, mais je vois bien ce qui vous choque, c'est la tristesse, c'est l'ironie. (P., 802)

(bb) Pauvre Belgique (1952):

(i) Singulier aspect des bouches dans la rue et partout. . . . Pas de lèvres d'ironie. (P., 1327)

(ii) Quand je me suis senti calomnier, j'ai voulu mettre un terme à cette passion nationale, en ce qui me concernait et, pauvre niais que je suis! je me suis servi de l'ironie. A tous ceux qui me demandaient pourquoi je restais si longtemps en Belgique . . . je répondais confidentiellement que j'étais mouchard. (P., 1351)

II References to paradox in the works of Baudelaire are also numerous. The listing is, once again, chronological, and the dates referred to are those of first publication.

(a) Salon de 1845:

(i) Ce tableau est parfaitement bien dessiné. Faut-il à propos de cet énorme paradoxe, de ce blasphème impudent, répéter, réexpliquer ce que M. Gautier s'est donné la peine d'expliquer dans un de ses feuilletons de l'année dernière . . . à savoir qu'il y a deux genres de dessins, le dessin des coloristes et le dessin des dessinateurs? (P., 817)

(ii) . . . tous nos ânes routiniers et antipoétiques se sont amoureusement tournés vers les âneries et les niaiseries vertueuses de M. Jules David, vers les paradoxes pédants de M. Vidal. (P., 827)

(b) Salon de 1846:

Cela explique comment un coloriste peut être paradoxal dans sa manière d'exprimer la couleur, et comment l'étude de la nature conduit souvent à un résultat tout différent de la nature. (P., 883)

(c) Pierre Dupont (1851):

De temps en temps retentissait dans l'air un grand vacarme de discours semblables à ceux du Portique, et les échos de la Maison-d'Or se mêlaient aux paradoxes innocents du palais législatif. (P., 607)

(d) Exposition universelle de 1855:

(i) Aucun voile scolaire, aucun paradoxe universitaire, aucun utopie pédagogique, ne se sont interposés entre eux et la complexe vérité. (P., 954)

(ii) C'est en quoi il se rapproche, quelque énorme que paraisse ce paradoxe, d'un jeune peintre dont les débuts remarquables se sont produits récemment avec l'allure d'une insurrection. (P., 963)

(e) Edgar Poe: Sa Vie et ses oeuvres (1856):

Il est d'ailleurs facile de supposer qu'un homme aussi réellement solitaire, aussi profondément malheureux, et qui a pu souvent envisager tout le système social comme un paradoxe et une imposture, un homme qui, harcelé par une destinée sans pitié, répétait souvent que la société n'est qu'une cohue de misérables. . . . (Curiosités esthétiques, l'art romantique et autres oeuvres critiques [Paris: Garnier, 1962], p. 613)

(f) Madame Bovary (1857):

(i) D'ailleurs, cette position de l'écrivain en retard, distancé par l'opinion, a, comme j'essayais de l'insinuer, un charme paradoxal. (P., 647)

(ii) . . . elle se gorgeait de la musique solennelle des vêpres, et, par un paradoxe dont tout l'honneur appartient aux nerfs, elle substituait dans son âme au Dieu véritable le Dieu de sa fantaisie, le Dieu de l'avenir et du hasard, un Dieu de vignette, avec éperons et moustaches; --voilà le poëte hystérique. (P., 654)

(g) Notes nouvelles sur Edgar Poe (1857):

(i) . . . il reste ce que fut et ce que sera le vrai poëte, --une vérité habillée d'une manière bizarre, un paradoxe apparent, qui ne veut pas être coudoyé par la foule, et qui court à l'extrême orient quand le feu d'artifice se tire au couchant. (Curiosités esthétiques, op. cit., p. 623)

(ii) Pour toute intelligence du vieux monde, un Etat politique a un centre de mouvement qui est son cerveau et son soleil, des souvenirs anciens et glorieux, de longues annales poétiques et militaires, une aristocratie, à qui la pauvreté, fille des révolutions, ne peut qu'ajouter un lustre paradoxal. (ibid., p. 628)

(iii) Le poème épique nous apparaît . . ., esthétiquement parlant, comme un paradoxe. (ibid., p. 633)

(h) Quelques Caricaturistes étrangers (1857):

Dans les tableaux fantastiques de Brueghel le Drôle se montre toute la puissance de l'hallucination. Quel artiste pourrait composer des oeuvres aussi monstrueusement paradoxales, s'il n'y était poussé dès le principe par quelque force inconnue? (P., 1023)

(i) Le Poëme du haschisch (1858-1860):

Ce n'est pas sans une certaine admiration que j'entendis une fois le paradoxe d'un officier qui me racontait l'opération cruelle pratiquée sur un général français à El-Aghouat, et dont celui-ci mourut malgré le chloroforme. (P., 384)

(j) Salon de 1859:

(i) Pour me résumer d'une manière paradoxale, je vous demanderai, à vous et à ceux de mes amis qui sont plus instruits que moi dans l'histoire de l'art, si le goût du bête, le goût du spirituel (qui est la même chose) ont existé de tout temps. . . . (P., 1032)

(ii) La fleur oubliée ou ignorée ajoute à son parfum naturel le parfum paradoxal de son obscurité, et sa valeur positive est augmentée par la joie de l'avoir découverte. (P., 1046)

(iii) En passant, nous pouvons jeter un regard d'admiration et presque de regret sur les charmantes productions de quelques hommes qui, dans l'époque de noble renaissance dont j'ai parlé au début de ce travail, représentaient le joli, le précieux, le délicieux, Eugène Lami qui, à travers ses paradoxaux petits personnages, nous fait voir un monde et un goût disparus, et Wattier, ce savant qui a tant aimé Watteau. (P., 1062)

(iv) Les majestés de la pierre accumulée, les clochers montrant du doigt le ciel, les obélisques de l'industrie vomissant contre le firmament leurs coalitions de fumée, les prodigieux échafaudages des monuments en réparation, appliquant sur le corps solide de l'architecture leur architecture à jour d'une beauté si paradoxale, le ciel tumultueux, chargé de colère et de rancune, la profondeur des perspectives augmentée par la pensée de tous les drames qui y sont contenus, aucun des éléments complexes dont se compose le douloureux et glorieux décor de la civilisation n'était oublié. (P., 1083)

(v) Devant un objet tiré de la nature et représenté par la sculpture, c'est-à-dire rond, fuyant, autour duquel on peut tourner librement, et, comme l'objet naturel lui-même, environné d'atmosphère, le paysan, le sauvage, l'homme primitif, n'éprouvent aucune indécision; tandis qu'une peinture, par ses prétensions immenses, par sa nature paradoxale et abstractive, les inquiète et les trouble. (P., 1087)

(vi) La langueur de ces formes menues quoique grandes, l'élégance paradoxale de ces membres est bien le fait d'un auteur moderne. (P., 1087)

(k) Pétrus Borel (1861):

Un républicanisme misanthropique fit alliance avec la nouvelle école, et Pétrus Borel fut l'expression la plus outrecuidante et la plus paradoxale de l'esprit des Bousingots ou du Bousingo. (P., 727)

(l) Peintres et aqua-fortistes (1862):

Pour vrai dire, ce genre [l'eau-forte], si subtil et si superbe, si naïf et si profond, si gai et si sévère, qui peut réunir paradoxalement les qualités les plus diverses, et qui exprime si bien le caractère personnel de l'artiste, n'a jamais joui d'une bien grande popularité parmi le vulgaire. (P., 1146)

(m) L'Oeuvre et la vie d'Eugène Delacroix (1863):

Il avait deux manières très distinctes de copier. L'une libre et large, faite moitié de fidélité, moitié de trahison, et où il mettait beaucoup de lui-même. De cette méthode résultait un composé bâtard et charmant, jetant l'esprit dans une incertitude agréable. C'est sous cet aspect paradoxal que m'apparut une grande copie des Miracles de saint Benoît, de Rubens. (P., 1134)

(n) "Les Tentations ou Eros, Plutus et la gloire" (1863):

"Veux-tu connaître ma puissance?" dit la fausse déesse avec sa voix charmante et paradoxale. (P., 261)

(o) Notes diverses sur L'Art Philosophique (1925):

Le paradoxe de l'aumône. (P., 1107)

(p) Pauvre Belgique (1952):

Les emblèmes, les bustes, les styles variés, les ors, les frontons, la maison atribuée à Rubens, les cariatides, l'arrière d'un navire, l'Hôtel de Ville, la maison du Roi, un monde de paradoxes d'architecture. (P., 1436)

APPENDIX C

The references to the arabesque in the works of Baudelaire are listed in chronological order. For purposes of completion, those references to the arabesque which appear in the text are also included. The dates referred to are those of first publication rather than of original composition.

(a) Edgar Poe: Sa Vie et ses oeuvres (1856):

> Il répandra avec une éblouissante rapidité des articles critiques, philosophiques, et des contes pleins de magie qui paraissent réunis sous le titre de Tales of the Grotesque and the Arabesque--titre remarquable et intentionnel, car les ornements grotesques et arabesques repoussent la figure humaine, et l'on verra qu'à beaucoup d'égards la littérature de Poe est extra ou supra-humaine. (Curiosités esthétiques, l'art romantique et autres oeuvres critiques de Baudelaire [Paris: Garnier, 1962], p. 603)

(b) Salon de 1859:

> Cependant les plus parfaits parmi ces groupes ne sont tels que parce qu'ils se rapprochent davantage de la vraie sculpture et que, par leurs attitudes penchées et leurs entrelacements, les figures créent cette arabesque générale de composition, immobile et fixe dans la peinture, mobile et variable dans la sculpture comme dans les pays de montagnes. (P., 1091)

(c) Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris (1861):

> Ce goût absolu, despotique, d'un idéal dramatique, où tout, depuis une déclamation notée et soulignée par la musique avec tant de soin qu'il est impossible au chanteur de s'en écarter en aucune syllabe, véritable arabesque de sons dessinée par la passion, jusqu'aux décors et à la mise en scène, où tous les détails . . . doivent sans cesse concourir à une totalité d'effet, a fait la destinée de Wagner. (P., 1219)

(d) Peintres et aqua-fortistes (1862):

> C'est si commode de promener une aiguille sur cette planche noire qui reproduira trop fidèlement toutes les arabesques de la fantaisie, toutes les hachures du caprice! (P., 1147)

(e) Le Peintre de la vie moderne (1863):

> Il s'établit alors un duel entre la volonté de tout voir, de ne rien oublier, et, la faculté de la mémoire qui a pris l'habitude d'absorber vivement la couleur générale et la silhouette, l'arabesque du contour. (P., 1167)

(f) Fusées (1887):

(i) Le dessin arabesque est le plus spiritualiste des dessins. (P., 1250)

(ii) Le dessin arabesque est le plus idéal de tous. (ibid.)

APPENDIX D

The references to the theatre in Baudelaire's art criticism are numerous. They are listed here in chronological order. For purposes of completion, those references to the theatre which appear in the text are also included. The dates referred to are those of first publication rather than of original composition.

(a) Salon de 1845:

(i) L'unité, nulle; mais une foule de petites anecdotes intéressantes--un vaste panorama de cabaret; --en général, ces sortes de décorations sont divisées en manière de compartiments ou d'actes, par un arbre, une grande montagne, une caverne, etc. (P., 819)

(ii) Tableaux qui visent à la couleur, et malheureusement n'arrivent qu'au coloriage de cafés, ou tout au plus d'opéra. (P., 830-831)

(iii) Tant qu'il ne s'agissait que de peindre des femmes solfiant de la musique romantique dans un bateau, ça allait; --de même qu'un pauvre opéra triomphe de sa musique à l'aide des objets décolletés ou plutôt déculottés et agréables à voir. (P., 833)

(b) Salon de 1846:

(i) En fait de gestes sublimes, Delacroix n'a de rivaux qu'en dehors de son art. Je ne connais guère que Frédérick Lemaître et Macready. (P., 899)

(ii) Quant à leur tournure et leur esprit, ces deux figures me rappellent l'emphase des acteurs de l'ancien Bobino, du temps qu'on y jouait des mélodrames. (P., 918)

(iii) Quand un chanteur met la main sur son coeur, cela veut dire d'ordinaire: je l'aimerai toujours! --Serre-t-il les poings en regardant le souffleur ou les planches, cela signifie: il mourra, le traître! --Voilà le poncif. (P., 926)

(iv) M. Alfred Dedreux a cela pour lui qu'il sait peindre, et que ses peintures ont l'aspect vif et frais des décorations du théâtre. (P., 928)

(v) M. Horace Vernet . . . est un homme d'une humeur heureuse et folâtre, qui habite un pays artificiel dont les acteurs et les coulisses sont faits du même carton; mais il règne en maître dans son royaume de parade et de divertissements. (P., 929)

(vi) M. Glaize croit qu'on devient coloriste par le choix exclusif de certains tons. Les commis étalagistes et les habilleurs de théâtre ont aussi le goût des tons riches; mais cela ne fait pas le goût de l'harmonie. (P., 934)

(vii) Quant au paysage de fantaisie, qui est l'expression de la rêverie humaine, l'égoïsme humain substitué à la nature, il fut peu cultivé. Ce genre singulier, dont Rembrandt, Rubens, Watteau, et quelques livres d'étrennes anglais offrent les meilleurs exemples, et qui est en petit l'analogue des belles décorations de l'Opéra, représente le besoin naturel du merveilleux. (P., 936)

(viii) Quant au paysage historique . . . il n'est ni la libre fantaisie, ni l'admirable servilisme des naturalistes: c'est la morale appliquée à la nature. . . . Il s'agit de reconstruire et de l'ordonner d'après des règles plus saines et plus pures, règles qui ne se trouvent pas dans le pur enthousiasme de l'idéal, mais dans des codes bizarres que les adeptes ne montrent à personne.

Ainsi la tragédie. . . . --La tragédie consiste à découper certains patrons éternels, qui sont l'amour, la haine, l'amour filial, l'ambition, etc., et, suspendus à des fils, de les faire marcher, saluer, s'asseoir et parler d'après une étiquette mystérieuse et sacrée. (P., 937)

(ix) M. Gudin rentre pour moi dans la classe des gens qui bouchent leurs plaies avec une chair artificielle, des mauvais chanteurs dont on dit qu'ils sont de grands acteurs, et des peintres poétiques. (P., 942)

(x) Du reste, il ne faut pas croire que ces gens-là manquent de science. Ils sont érudits comme des vaudevillistes et des académiciens. (P., 945)

(c) Pierre Dupont (1851-1854):

La plupart des chants de Pierre Dupont, qu'ils soient une situation de l'esprit ou un récit, sont des drames lyriques, dont les descriptions font les décors et le fond. (P., 614)

(d) Exposition universelle de 1855:

(i) Quant à Guérin et Girodet, il ne serait pas difficile de découvrir en eux . . . l'esprit de mélodrame, quelques légers grains corrupteurs, quelques sinistres symptômes du futur Romantisme. Ne vous semble-t-il pas que cette *Didon*, avec sa toilette si précieuse et si théâtrale . . . a plus de parenté avec les premières visions de Chateaubriand qu'avec les conceptions de Virgile. . . . L'*Atala* de Girodet est . . . un drame de beaucoup supérieur à une foule de fadaises modernes innommables. (P., 962)

(ii) La *Justice de Trajan* est un tableau si prodigieusement lumineux, si aéré, si rempli de tumulte et de pompe! L'empereur est si beau, la foule tortillée autour des colonnes ou circulant avec le cortège, si tumultueuse, la veuve éplorée, si dramatique! . . . Le tableau des *Croisés* est si profondément pénétrant. . . . Toujours la foule agissante, inquiète, le tumulte des armes, la pompe des vêtements, la vérité emphatique du geste dans les grandes circonstances de la vie! Ces deux tableaux sont d'une beauté essentiellement Shakespearienne. Car nul, après Shakespeare, n'excelle comme Delacroix à fondre dans une unité mystérieuse le drame et la rêverie. (P., 970)

(iii) . . . le dessin doit être comme la nature, vivant et agitée; . . . la simplification dans le dessin est une monstruosité, comme la tragédie dans le monde dramatique; . . . la nature nous présente une série infinie de lignes courbes, fuyantes, brisées, suivant une loi de génération impeccable, où le parallélisme est toujours indécis et sinueux, où les concavités et les convexités se correspondent et se poursuivent; . . . M. Delacroix satisfait admirablement à toutes ces conditions et . . ., quand même son dessin laisserait percer quelquefois des défaillances ou des outrances, il a au moins cet immense mérite d'être une protestation perpétuelle et efficace contre la barbare ligne droite, cette ligne tragique et systématique, dont actuellement les ravages sont déjà immenses dans la peinture et dans la sculpture. (P., 973)

(iv) Et remarquez bien que ce n'est jamais par la grimace, par la minutie, par la tricherie de moyens, que M. Delacroix arrive à ce prodigieux résultat; mais par l'ensemble, par l'accord profond, complet, entre sa couleur, son sujet, son dessin, et par la dramatique gesticulation de ses figures. (P., 974)

(e) Quelques Caricaturistes étrangers (1857):

(i) Si l'on pouvait analyser sûrement une chose aussi fugitive et impalpable que le sentiment en art, ce je ne sais quoi qui distingue toujours un artiste d'un autre, quelque intime que soit en apparence leur parenté, je dirais que ce qui constitue surtout le grotesque de Cruikshank, c'est la violence extravagante du geste et du mouvement, et l'explosion dans l'expression. Tous ces petits personnages miment avec fureur et turbulence comme des acteurs de pantomime. (P., 1016)

(ii) Je me rappelle surtout deux planches extraordinaires: --l'une représente un paysage fantastique, un mélange de nuées et de rochers. Est-ce un coin de Sierra inconnue et infréquentée? un échantillon de chaos? Là, au sein de ce théâtre abominable, a lieu une bataille acharnée entre deux sorcières, suspendues au milieu des airs. . . . (P., 1018-1019)

(f) Salon de 1859:

(i) Tout cela, sans doute, était écrit avec ce lâché dramatique dont il a pris l'habitude en causant avec son innombrable auditoire. (P., 1039-1040)

(ii) Remarquons en passant qu'E. Delacroix, au lieu de faire de la très-sainte Mère une femmelette d'album, lui donne toujours un geste et une ampleur tragique qui conviennent parfaitement à cette reine des mères. (P., 1051)

(iii) M. H. Vernet crut une fois, plusieurs fois même, résoudre la difficulté par une série d'épisodes accumulés et juxtaposés. Dès lors, le tableau, privé d'unité, ressemble à ces mauvais drames où une surcharge d'incidents parasites empêche d'apercevoir l'idée mère, la conception génératrice. (P., 1059)

(iv) J'avoue que ce qui m'afflige le plus en ces sortes de spectacles, ce n'est pas cette abondance de blessures, cette prodigalité hideuse de membres écharpés, mais bien l'immobilité dans la violence et l'épouvantable et froide grimace d'une fureur stationnaire. (P., 1059-1060)

(v) Il compose admirablement, groupe avec esprit, colore avec ardeur, et jette une flamme amusante dans tous ses drames; drames, car il a la composition dramatique et quelque chose qui ressemble au génie de l'opéra. (P., 1062)

(vi) Je sais le plus grand gré à M. Chiffart d'avoir traité ces poétiques sujets héroïquement et dramatiquement, et d'avoir rejeté bien loin les fadaises de la mélancolie apprise. (P., 1066)

(vii) Peinture riche et minutieuse, avec des tons violents et un fini précieux, ouvrage plein d'opiniâtreté, mais dramatique, emphatique même; car nos amis d'outre-Manche ne représentent pas les sujets tirés du théâtre comme des scènes vraies, mais comme des scènes jouées avec l'exagération nécessaire. . . . (P., 1070)

(viii) Il y a de longues années, il nous étonnait déjà par l'aplomb de sa fabrication, par la rondeur de son jeu, comme on dit au théâtre. (P., 1078)

(ix) Voulez-vous contempler encore une fois, mais sous une autre forme, le contraire de la sculpture? Regardez ces deux petits mondes dramatiques inventés par M. Butté et qui représentent, je crois, la Tour de Babel et le Déluge. . . . Et à propos de M. Butté, qui a voulu représenter dans de petites proportions de vastes scènes exigeant une quantité innombrable de personnages, nous pouvons remarquer que les anciens reléguaient toujours ces tentatives dans le bas-relief. . . . Les deux conditions essentielles, l'unité d'impression et la totalité d'effet, se trouvent douloureusement offensées, et, si grand que soit le talent du metteur en scène, l'esprit inquiet se demande s'il n'a pas déjà senti une impression analogue chez Curtius. (P., 1090-1091)

(g) Peintures murales d'Eugène Delacroix (1861):

. . . elle [the legend of Lucifer] se présente avec une magnificence des plus dramatiques. (P., 1109)

(h) L'Oeuvre et la vie d'Eugène Delacroix (1863):

(i) . . . la faconde dramatique et quasi littéraire de Lebrun. (P., 1116)

(ii) . . . ce que nous admirons surtout en lui, la violence, la soudaineté dans le geste, la turbulence de la composition, la magie de la couleur. . . . (P., 1126)

(i) Le Peintre de la vie moderne (1863):

(i) M.G. restera le dernier partout où peut resplendir la lumière, retentir la poésie, fourmiller la vie, vibrer la musique; partout où une passion peut poser pour son oeil, partout où l'homme naturel et l'homme de convention se montrent dans une beauté bizarre. . . . (P., 1162)

(ii) . . . M.G., traduisant fidèlement ses propres impressions, marque avec une énergie instinctive les points culminants ou lumineux d'un objet (ils peuvent être culminants ou lumineux au point de vue dramatique), ou ses principales caractéristiques, quelquefois même avec une exagération utile pour la mémoire humaine. (P., 1166)

(iii) Il s'établit alors un duel entre la volonté de tout voir, de ne rien oublier, et la faculté de la mémoire qui a pris l'habitude d'absorber vivement la couleur générale et la silhouette, l'arabesque du contour. . . . La même analogie se fait deviner dans la pratique de l'art du comédien, art si mystérieux, si profond, tombé aujourd'hui dans la confusion des décadences. M. Frédérick Lemaître compose un rôle avec l'ampleur et la largeur du génie. Si étoilé que soit son jeu de détails lumineux, il reste toujours synthétique et sculpturale. M. Bouffé compose les siens avec une minutie de myope et de bureaucrate. En lui tout éclate, mais rien ne se fait voir, rien ne veut être gardé par la mémoire. (P., 1167-1168)

(iv) Pour tout dire en un mot, notre singulier artiste exprime à la fois le geste et l'attitude solonnelle ou grotesque des êtres et leur explosion lumineuse dans l'espace. (P., 1169)

(j) Catalogue de la collection de M. Crabbe (1908):

(i) Robert Fleur. Deux scènes historiques. Toujours le meilleur spécimen. Belle entente du Théâtre. (P., 1200)

(ii) Eugène Delacroix. Chasse au Tigre. . . . Le geste de l'homme et le geste de la bête. La grimace de la bête. . . . (P., 1201)

(k) Letter to General Aupick, July 1838:

Tous les tableaux du temps de l'Empire, qu'on dit fort beaux, paraissent souvent si réguliers, si froids! Leurs personnages sont souvent échelonnés comme des arbres ou des figurants d'opéra. (Lettres inédites aux siens, ed. P. Auserve [Paris: Grasset, 1966], p. 153)

APPENDIX E

References to the "theatre of life" are listed in chronological order. For purposes of completion, those references already mentioned in the text are also included. The dates referred to are those of first publication rather than of original composition.

(a) Salon de 1846:

> Dans le sens le plus généralement adopté, Français veut dire vaudevilliste, et vaudevilliste un homme à qui Michel-Ange donne le vertige et que Delacroix remplit d'une stupeur bestiale, comme le tonnerre certains animaux. (P., 926)

(b) La Fanfarlo (1847):

> (i) Ma tante, cruelle comme toutes les femmes vieilles et envieuse, qui sont réduites à admirer un spectacle où jadis elles furent actrices, et à contempler les jouissances qu'on leur refuse, eut grand soin de me faire savoir . . . qu'il s'était épris d'une fille de théâtre fort en vogue. (P., 498)

> (ii) Il n'est rien que je n'aie tenté. Au lieu des toilettes sombres et simples auxquelles son regard se plaisait autrefois, j'ai porté des toilettes folles et somptueuses comme les femmes de théâtre. Moi, la chaste épouse qu'il était allé chercher au fond d'un pauvre château, j'ai paradé devant lui avec des robes de fille; je me suis faite spirituelle et enjouée quand j'avais la mort dans le coeur. J'ai pailleté mon désespoir avec des sourires étincelants. Hélas! il n'a rien vu. J'ai mis du rouge, Monsieur, j'ai mis du rouge! --Vous le voyez, c'est une histoire banale, l'histoire de toutes les malheureuses, --un roman de province! (P., 499-500)

(c) Les Contes de Champfleury (1848):

> . . . Carnaval, ou quelques notes précieuses sur cette curiosité ambulante, cette douleur attifé de rubans et de bariolages dont rient les imbéciles, mais que les Parisiens respectent. (P., 600)

(d) "Le Mauvais Moine" (1851):

> O moine fainéant! quand saurai-je donc faire
> Du spectacle vivant de ma triste misère
> Le travail de mes mains et l'amour de mes yeux? (P., 15)

(e) Du vin et du hachish (1851):

> (i) . . . des fanfarons de sobriété, buvant en cachette et ayant quelque vin occulte. (P., 328)
>
> (ii) La plupart du temps, les novices, à leur première initiation, se plaignent de la lenteur des effets. Ils les attendent avec anxiété, et comme cela ne va pas assez vite à leur gré, ils font des fanfaronnades d'incrédulité qui réjouissent beaucoup ceux qui connaissent les choses et la manière dont le hachish se gouverne. (P., 335)

(f) L'Ecole païenne (1852):

> Tout enfant dont l'esprit poétique sera surexcité, dont le spectacle excitant de moeurs actives et laborieuses ne frappera pas incessamment les yeux, qui entendra sans cesse parler de gloire et de volupté, dont les sens seront journellement caressés, irrités, effrayés, allumés et satisfaits par des objets d'art, deviendra le plus malheureux des hommes et rendra les autres malheureux. (P., 627)

(g) Morale du joujou (1853):

> (i) Tous les enfants parlent à leurs joujoux; les joujoux deviennent acteurs dans le grand drame de la vie, réduit par la chambre noire de leur cerveaux. (P., 525)
>
> (ii) Il y a dans un grand magasin de joujoux une gaieté extraordinaire qui le rend préférable à un bel appartement bourgeoise. Toute la vie en miniature ne s'y trouve-t-elle pas, et beaucoup plus colorée, nettoyée et luisante que la vie réelle? On y voit des jardins, des théâtres, de belles toilettes, des yeux purs comme le diamant, des joues allumées par le fard, des dentelles charmantes, des voitures, des écuries, des étables, des ivrognes, des charlatans, des banquiers, des comédiens, des polichinelles qui ressemblent à des

> feux d'artifice, des cuisines, et des armées entières, bien disciplinées, avec de la cavalerie et de l'artillerie. (P., 525)

(iii) Les enfants témoignent par leurs jeux de leur grande faculté d'abstraction et de leur haute puissance imaginative. . . . Mais la diligence, l'éternel drame de la diligence joué avec des chaises. . . . Quelle simplicité de mise en scène! et n'y a-t-il pas de quoi faire rougir de son impuissante imagination ce public blasé qui exige des théâtres une perfection physique et mécanique, et ne conçoit pas que les pièces de Shakespeare puissent rester belles avec un appareil d'une simplicité barbare? (P., 525-526)

(h) "Au lecteur" (1855):

C'est le diable qui tient les fils qui nous remuent!
. . . .
Si le viol, le poison, le poignard, l'incendie,
N'ont pas encore brodé de leurs plaisants dessins
Le canevas banal de nos piteux destins,
C'est que notre âme, hélas! n'est pas assez hardie. (P., 5)

(i) "L'Irréparable" (1855):

J'ai vu parfois, au fond d'un théâtre banal
    Qu'enflammait l'orchestre sonore,
Une fée allumer dans un ciel infernal
    Une miraculeuse aurore;
J'ai vu parfois au fond d'un théâtre banal

Un être, qui n'était que lumière, or et gaze,
    Terrasser l'énorme Satan;
Mais mon coeur, que jamais ne visite l'extase,
    Est un théâtre où l'on attend
Toujours, toujours en vain, l'Etre aux ailes de gaze! (P., 53)

(j) E. Poe (1856):

> Leur destinée est écrite dans toute leur constitution, elle brille d'un éclat sinistre dans leurs regards et dans leurs gestes, elle circule dans leurs artères avec chacun de leurs globules sanguins. (Curiosités esthétiques, l'art romantique et autres oeuvres critiques [Paris: Garnier, 1962], P. 595)

(k) "Une Charogne" (1857):

Les formes s'effacaient et n'étaient plus qu'un rêve,
    Une ébauche lente à venir,
Sur la toile oubliée, et que l'artiste achève
    Seulement par le souvenir. (P., 30)

(l) Quelques caricaturistes français (1857):

> Telle était la mode, telle était l'être humain: les hommes ressemblaient aux peintures; le monde s'était moulé dans l'art. . . . Les poses, les gestes ont un accent véridique. . . . (P., 994)

(m) "L'Albatros" (1859):

> L'un agace son bec avec un brûle-gueule,
> L'autre mime, en boitant, l'infirme qui volait! (P., 10)

(n) "Le Masque" (1859):

> O blasphème de l'art! ô surprise fatale!
> Le femme au corps divin, promettant le bonheur,
> Par le haut se termine en monstre bicéphale!
>
> --Mais non! ce n'est qu'un masque, un décor suborneur,
> Ce visage éclairé d'une exquise grimace,
> Et, regarde, voici, crispée atrocement,
> La véritable tête, et la sincère face
> Renversée à l'abri de la face qui ment. (P., 22-23)

(o) "Danse macabre" (1859):

> La ruche qui se joue au bord des clavicules,
> Comme un ruisseau lascif qui se frotte au rocher,
> Défend pudiquement des lazzi ridicules
> Les funèbres appas qu'elle tient à cacher.
> . . . .
> Viens-tu troubler, avec ta puissante grimace,
> La fête de la vie? (P., 92-93)

(p) "Le Voyage" (1859):

> Nous voulons voyager sans vapeur et sans voile!
> Faites, pour égayer l'ennui de nos prisons,
> Passer sur nos esprits, tendus comme une toile,
> Vos souvenirs avec leurs cadres d'horizons. (P., 124)

(q) Salon de 1859:

> (i) . . . M. Heim . . . nous a révélé, dans une procession de croquis, une merveilleuse intelligence de la grimace humaine. On n'entendra pas, je présume, le mot dans un sens désagréable. Je veux parler de la grimace naturelle et professionnelle qui appartient à chacun. (P., 1074)

(ii) J'ai rarement vu représentée avec plus de poésie la solennité naturelle d'une ville immense. Les majestés de la pierre accumulée, les clochers montrant du doigt le ciel, les obélisques de l'industrie vomissant contre le firmament leurs coalitions de fumée, les prodigieux échafaudages des monuments en réparation, appliquant sur le corps solide de l'architecture leur architecture à jour d'une beauté si paradoxale, le ciel tumultueux, chargé de colère et de rancune, la profondeur des perspectives augmentée par la pensée de tous les drames qui y sont contenus, aucun des éléments complexes dont se compose le douloureux et glorieux décor de la civilisation n'était oublié. (P., 1083)

(iii) . . . en faisant un pas de plus à gauche ou à droite, vous découvrez le secret de l'allégorie, la morale de la fable, je veux dire la véritable tête révulsée, se pâmant dans les larmes et l'agonie. Ce qui avait d'abord enchanté vos yeux, c'était un masque, c'était le masque universel, votre masque, mon masque, joli éventail dont une main habile se sert pour voiler aux yeux du monde la douleur ou le remords. (P., 1094-1095)

(r) Théophile Gautier (1859):

(i) Depuis le sommet de l'aristocratie jusqu'aux bas-fonds de la plèbe, tous les acteurs de sa Comédie [i.e. of Balzac] sont plus âpres à la vie, plus actifs et rusés dans la lutte, plus patients dans le malheur, plus goulus dans la jouissance, plus angéliques dans le dévouement, que la comédie du vrai monde ne nous les montre. (P., 692)

(ii) "Vous me croyez froid, et vous ne voyez pas que je m'impose un calme artificiel que veulent sans cesse troubler votre laideur et votre barbarie, ô hommes de prose et de crime! Ce que vous appelez indifférence n'est que la résignation du désespoir; celui-là ne peut s'attendrir que bien rarement qui considère les méchants et les sots comme des incurables. C'est donc pour éviter le spectacle désolant de votre démence et de votre cruauté que mes regards restent obstinément tournés vers la Muse immaculée." (P., 700)

(s) "L'Amour du mensonge" (1860):

Mais ne suffit-il pas que tu sois l'apparence,
Pour réjouir un coeur qui fuit la vérité?
Qu'importe ta bêtise ou ton indifférence?
Masque ou décor, salut! J'adore ta beauté. (P., 95)

(t) "Le Rêve d'un curieux" (1860):

Tout mon coeur s'arrachait du monde familier.

J'étais comme l'enfant avide du spectacle,
Haïssant le rideau comme on haït un obstacle...
Enfin la vérité froide se révéla:

J'étais mort sans surprise, et la terrible aurore
M'enveloppait. --Eh quoi! n'est-ce donc que cela?
La toile était levée et j'attendais encore. (P., 121-122)

(u) Un Mangeur d'opium (1860):

(i) Rien, il est vrai, n'est plus propre à révolter le sens anglais, que le spectacle d'un être humain, imposant à notre attention ses cicatrices et ses ulcères moraux, et arrachant cette pudique draperie dont le temps ou l'indulgence pour la fragilité humaine avait consenti à les revêtir. (P., 389)

(ii) Ce ne fut que plusieurs mois plus tard qu'il put revoir le théâtre de ses souffrances de jeunesse. (P., 407)

(iii) Combien de fois dut-il revoir sur ce second théâtre, allumé dans son esprit par l'opium et la musique, les routes et les montagnes qu'il avait parcourues. . . . (P., 413)

(iv) . . . pensée solitaire, qui aspire à s'envoler loin de ce sol et loin du théâtre des luttes humaines. (P., 460)

(v) . . . si la vie pouvait magiquement s'ouvrir devant nous, si notre oeil, jeune encore, pouvait parcourir les corridors, scruter les salles et les chambres de cette hôtellerie, théâtres des futures tragédies et des châtiments qui nous attendent, nous et nos amis, tous, nous reculerions frémissants d'horreur! (P., 462)

(v) "La Voix" (1861):

. . . Derrière les décors
De l'existence immense, au plus noir de l'abîme,
Je vois distinctement des mondes singuliers,
Et, de ma clairvoyance extatique victime,
Je traîne des serpents qui mordent mes souliers. (P., 153)

(w) "La Prière d'un païen" (1861):

> Volupté, sois toujours ma reine!
> Prends le masque d'une sirène
> Faite de chair et de velours. (P., 167)

(x) "Le Couvercle" (1861):

> En haut, le Ciel! ce mur de caveau qui l'étouffe,
> Plafond illuminé par un opéra bouffe
> Où chaque histrion foule un sol ensanglanté. (P., 168)

(y) "Le Rebelle" (1861):

> Sache qu'il faut aimer, sans faire grimace,
> Le pauvre, le méchant, le tordu, l'hébété. (P., 171)

(z) "Les Foules" (1861):

> Il n'est pas donné à chacun de prendre un bain de multitude: jouir de la foule est un art; et celui-là seul peut faire, aux dépens du genre humain, une ribote de vitalité, à qui une fée a insufflé dans son berceau le goût du travestissement et du masque, la haine du domicile et la passion du voyage. . . . Le poëte jouit de cet incomparable privilège, qu'il peut à sa guise être lui-même et autrui. Comme ces âmes errantes qui cherchent un corps, il entre, quand il veut, dans la personnage de chacun. . . . Il adopte comme siennes toutes les professions, toutes les joies et toutes les misères que la circonstance lui présente. (P., 243-244)

(aa) Victor Hugo (1861):

> . . . s'abandonner à toutes les rêveries suggérées par le spectacle infini de la vie sur la terre et dans les cieux, est le droit légitime du premier venu, conséquemment du poëte, à qui il est accordé alors de traduire, dans un langage magnifique, autre que la prose et la musique, les conjectures éternelles de la curieuse humanité. (P., 711)

(bb) Théodore de Banville (1861):

> Mais enfin, direz-vous, si lyrique que soit le poëte, peut-il donc ne jamais descendre des régions éthéréennes, ne jamais sentir le courant de la vie ambiante, ne jamais voir le spectacle de la vie, la grotesquerie perpétuelle de la bête humaine, la nauséabonde niaiserie de la femme, etc.? (P., 738)

(cc) *Les Martyrs ridicules* (1861):

(i) Il y a une troisième espèce de jeunes gens qui *aspirent à faire le bonheur du peuple*, et qui ont étudié la théologie et la politique dans le journal *le Siècle*; c'est généralement de petits avocats, qui réussiront, comme tant d'autres, à se grimer pour la tribune, à singer le Robespierre et à *déclamer*, eux aussi, des choses *graves*, mais avec moins de pureté que lui. (P., 753)

(ii) Cependant elle [the young writers] a ses classiques, particulièrement Henri Murger et Alfred de Musset. Elle ignore avec quelle amère gausserie Murger parlait de la *Bohème*; et quant à *l'autre*, ce n'est pas dans ses nobles attitudes qu'elle s'appliquera à l'imiter, mais dans ses crises de fatuité, dans ses fanfaronnades de paresse, à l'heure où, avec des dandinements de commis voyageur, un cigare au bec, il s'échappe d'un dîner à l'ambassade pour aller à la maison de jeu ou au salon de conversation. (P., 754)

(dd) *Richard Wagner et* Tannhäuser *à Paris* (1861):

Bientôt . . . des morceaux symphoniques de Wagner retentirent dans les casinos ouverts tous les soirs à une foule amoureuse de voluptés triviales. La majesté fulgurante de cette musique tombait là comme le tonnerre dans un mauvais lieu. Le bruit s'en répandit vite, et nous eûmes souvent le spectacle comique d'hommes graves et délicats subissant le contact des cohues malsaines, pour jouir, en attendant mieux, de la marche solonnelle des *Invités au Wartburg* ou des majestueuses noces de *Lohengrin*. (P., 1215)

(ee) "Le Gâteau" (1862):

8

A quoi bon décrire une lutte hideuse qui dura en vérité plus longtemps que leurs forces enfantines ne semblaient le promettre? . . . Ce spectacle m'avait embrumé le paysage, et la joie calme où s'ébaudissait mon âme avant d'avoir vu ces petits hommes avait totalement disparu. (P., 251)

(ff) "Le Joujou du pauvre" (1862):

Le luxe, l'insouciance et le spectacle habituel de la richesse rendent ces enfants-là si jolis, qu'on les croirait faits d'une autre pâte que les enfants de la médiocrité ou de la pauvreté. (P., 256)

(gg) "Une Mort héroïque" (1863):

Le grand malheur de ce Prince fut qu'il n'eut jamais un théâtre assez vaste pour son génie. (P., 270) (hh) Le Peintre de la vie moderne (1863):

(i) L'idée que l'homme se fait du beau s'imprime dans tout son ajustement, chiffonne ou raidit son habit, arrondit ou aligne son geste, et même pénètre subtilement, à la longue, les traits de son visage. (P., 1153)

(ii) Pour le croquis de moeurs, la représentation de la vie bourgeoise et les spectacles de la mode, le moyen le plus expéditif et le moins coûteux est évidemment le meilleur. (P., 1155)

(iii) . . . le geste et le port de la femme actuelle donnnent à sa robe une vie et une physionomie qui ne sont pas celles de la femme ancienne. . . . . J'ai dit que chaque époque avait son port, son regard et son geste. C'est surtout dans une vaste galerie de portraits (celle de Versailles, par exemple) que cette proposition devient facile à vérifier. Mais elle peut s'étendre plus loin encore. Dans l'unité qui s'appelle nation, les professions, les castes, les siècles introduisent la variété, non seulement dans les gestes et les manières, mais aussi dans la forme positive du visage. (P., 1164)

(iv) Tantôt, frappées par la clarté diffuse d'une salle de spectacle, recevant et renvoyant la lumière avec leurs yeux, avec les bijoux, avec leurs épaules, apparaissent, resplendissantes comme des portraits dans la loge qui leur sert de cadre, des jeunes filles du meilleur monde, . . . Elles ont l'éventail aux dents, l'oeil vague ou fixe; elles sont théâtrales et solennelles comme le drame ou l'opéra qu'elles font semblant d'écouter.

Tantôt, nous voyons se promener nonchalamment dans les allées des jardins publics, d'élégantes familles, les femmes se traînant avec un air tranquille au bras de leurs maris, dont l'air solide et satisfait révèle une fortune faite et le contentement de soi-même. Ici l'apparence cossue remplace la distinction sublime. De petites filles maigrelettes, avec d'amples jupons, et ressemblant par leurs gestes et leur tournure à de petites femmes, sautent à la corde, jouent au cerceau ou se rendent des visites en plein air, répétant ainsi la comédie donnée à domicile par leurs parents.

Emergeant d'un monde inférieur, fières d'apparaître enfin au soleil de la rampe, des filles de petits théâtres, minces, fragiles, adolescentes encore, secouent leurs formes virginales et maladives de travestissements absurdes qui ne sont d'aucun temps et qui font leur joie. (P., 1186)

(ii) "Portrait des maîtresses" (1867):

> L'histoire de mon amour ressemble à un interminable voyage sur une surface pure et polie comme un miroir, vertigineusement monotone, qui aurait réfléchi tous mes sentiments et mes gestes avec l'exactitude ironique de ma propre conscience, de sorte que je ne pouvais pas me permettre un geste ou un sentiment déraisonnable sans apercevoir immédiatement le reproche muet de mon inséparable spectre. (P., 296)

(jj) Letter to Jules Janin (1887):

> J'irai jusque-là que je vous demanderai si les spectacles de la terre vous suffisent. Quoi! jamais vous n'avez eu envie de vous en aller, rien que pour changer de spectacle! (P., 805)

(kk) Fusées (1887):

> (i) Dans un spectacle, dans un bal, chacun jouit de tous. (P., 1247)
>
> (ii) Entendez-vous ces soupirs, préludes d'une tragédie de déshonneur, ces gémissements, ces cris, ces râles? . . . Epouvantable jeu où il faut que l'un des joueurs perde le gouvernement de soi-même. (P., 1249)
>
> (iii) Jean-Jacques disait qu'il n'entrait dans un café qu'avec une certaine émotion. Pour une nature timide, un contrôle de théâtre ressemble quelque peu au tribunal des Enfers. (P., 1252)

(ll) Mon Coeur mis à nu (1887):

> (i) George Sand est une de ces vieilles ingénues qui ne veulent jamais quitter les planches. (P., 1281)
>
> (ii) On ne peut pas manquer d'esprit et chercher dans Dieu le complice et l'ami qui manquent toujours. Dieu est l'éternel confident dans cette tragédie dont chacun est le héros. (P., 1298)

(mm) Bribes (1931):

> Grand ange qui portez sur votre fier visage
> La noirceur de l'Enfer d'où vous êtes monté;
> Dompteur féroce et doux qui m'avez mis en cage
> Pour servir de spectacle à votre cruauté. (P., 178)

(nn) Compte rendu de l'Histoire de Neuilly de l'abbé Bellanger (1935):

> M. l'abbé Bellanger . . . prend l'histoire de cette localité depuis l'époque romaine jusqu'aux terribles journées de Février où le Château fut le théâtre et la proie des plus ignobles passions, l'orgie et la destruction. Neuilly fut . . . choisi par la providence ou la fatalité, quatre fois en soixante ans, comme théâtre de grands faits nationaux et décisifs. (P., 633)

(oo) Pauvre Belgique (1952):

(i) Plaisanteries belges sur les Français (les Belges posent pour le Bonheur). (P., 1382)

(ii) Situation comique de la Chambre à un certain moment. Les deux partis égaux, moins une voix. --Magnifique spectacle des élections, comme disent les journaux français. (P., 1410)

(iii) Commence la grande comédie du Deuil. --Banderolles [sic] noires, panégyriques, apothéoses, --boissonneries, pisseries, vomissements de toute la population. --Tous les Belges sont [dans] la rue, le nez en l'air, serrés et silencieux comme au bal masqué. --Ils s'amusent ainsi. --Jamais Bruxelles, en réalité, n'avait vu pareille fête. (P., 1421)

(iv) Etonnante naïveté dans la dramatisation des idées religieuses. (P., 1435)

(v) Sainte-Catherine. Parfum exotique. Ex-votos [sic]. Vierges peintes, fardées et parées. Odeur déterminée de cire et d'encens.

Toujours les chaires énormes et théâtrales. (P., 1438)

(vi) Style Jésuite. . . . Confessionnaux théâtraux. Il y a du théâtre et du boudoir dans la décoration jésuitique. (P., 1445)

(vii) Eglise Saint-Paul. Confessionnaux pompeux, théâtraux. . . . (Ridicule Calvaire. Ici la sculpture dramatique arrive au comique sauvage, au comique involontaire.) (P., 1446)